PLAYSTATION 4 PLAY

ISSUE NO 242
VIVA LA RESOLUTION

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PS4, PS3 & VITA
REVIEWS

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NAUGHTY DOG

THE BEST PLACE TO PLAY
BETTER ON PS4

MASSIVE HANDS-ON!
THE ELDER SCROLLS ONLINE

HOW ONE CONSOLE CAN DO 1080P
AND ONE JUST CAN'T

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Welcome PLAY

The UK's only independent **PlayStation** magazine

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JOIN ME IN DEATH

SO ACCORDING TO the guys at Bandai Namco, I was the first person outside of the developer and publisher to finish *Dark Souls II*. In my 60-hour run, I managed to keep the death count down to just over 300 – a rate of five beatings per hour, which I'm more than happy with. The best part, though? I did it blind. No wiki, no tips, no walkthroughs, no advice… no nothing, not never. I had to, mind. While you guys will already have the luxury of a wiki that is updated at staggering speed, I had to work everything out for myself. But believe me when I say that right there is the best way to experience *Dark Souls II* – if my plea reaches you before it's too late, step away from the wiki and do your first run on your own. You'll be glad you did.

I was right at the end of a New Game+ run on the debug build when retail copies arrived. You'd think that after 90 hours total – and with so many other massive games to play – I'd have given it a few weeks before heading back to Drangleic. Yeah, whatever. Straight back in and the speed-run began, this time with a dangerous (for everyone else, at least) combination of working online functionality and vast experience making my name one that would strike fear into the hearts of many an unfortunate invasion victim.

And I'm still playing now – there were six whole areas I never even saw, four Covenants I missed, God knows how many bosses still to find and slay… hell, I still haven't found the ember for the second blacksmith, meaning that I finished the game with a weapon I picked up in the first few hours. Mad skills, yo.

It's testament to how good *Dark Souls II* is that despite this issue's loaded review section, I've still only scratched the surface of this bizarre gaming Marchsplosion. I just can't stop dying, and I'm more than happy with this. My backlog isn't going anywhere any time soon anyway…

Enjoy the issue, and I'll see ya online.

LUKE ALBIGÉS
DEPUTY EDITOR
@LukemonMGJ
PSN: PorthMinster

CURRENTLY PLAYING
Dark Souls II (still)

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With great power comes great irresponsibility

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INFAMOUS: SECOND SON
A superhuman effort, only on PS4

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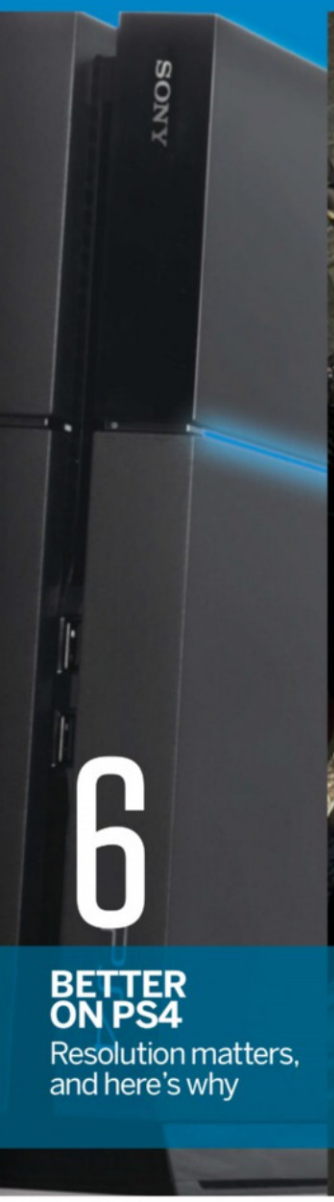

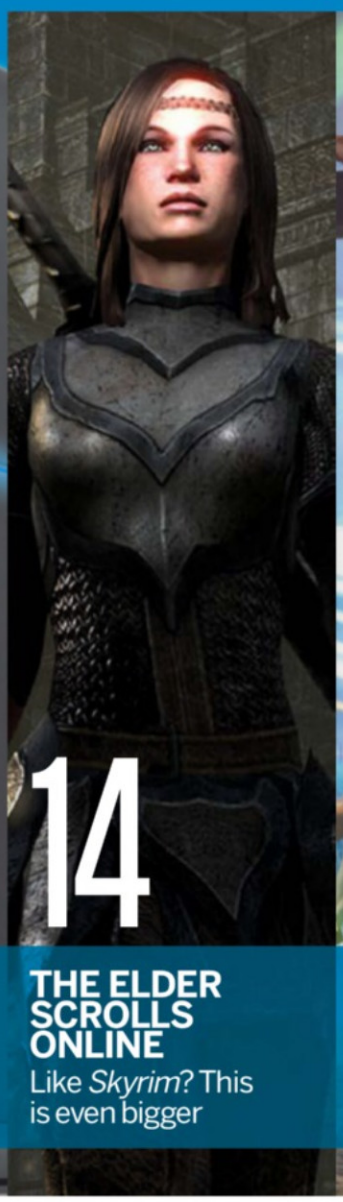

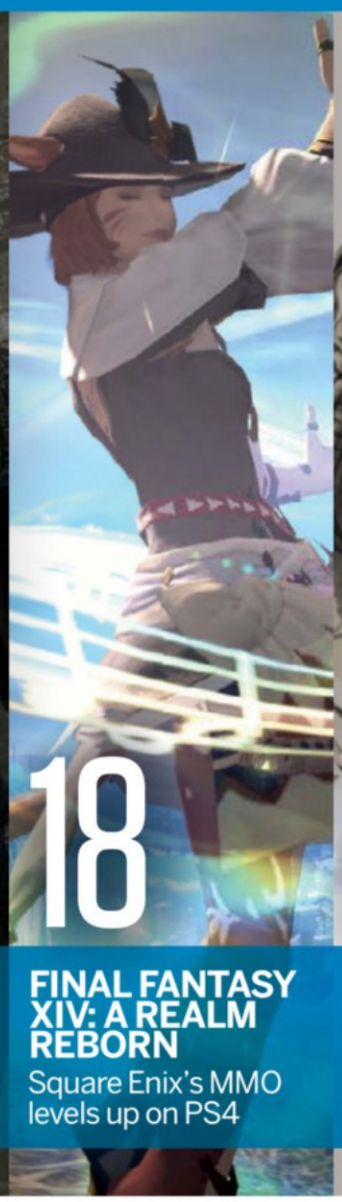

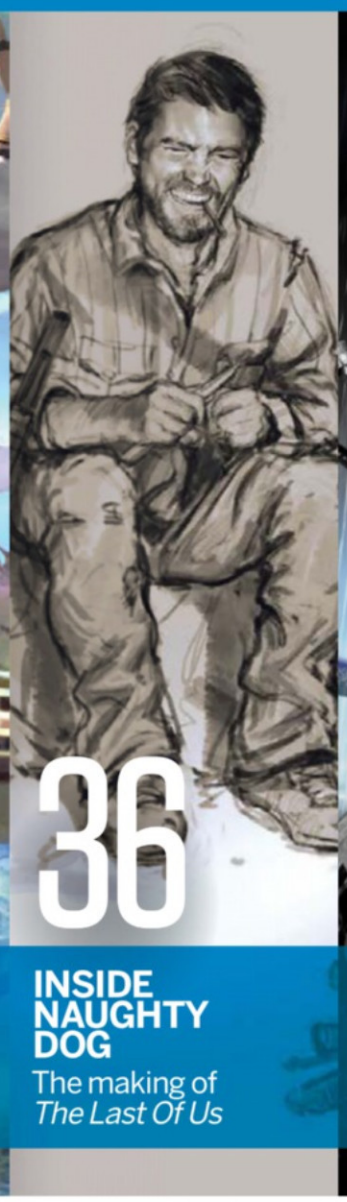

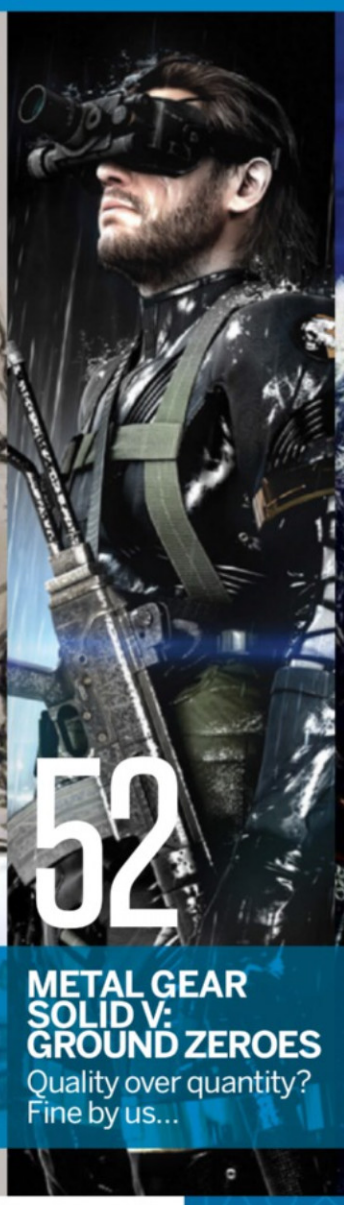

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BETTER ON PS4

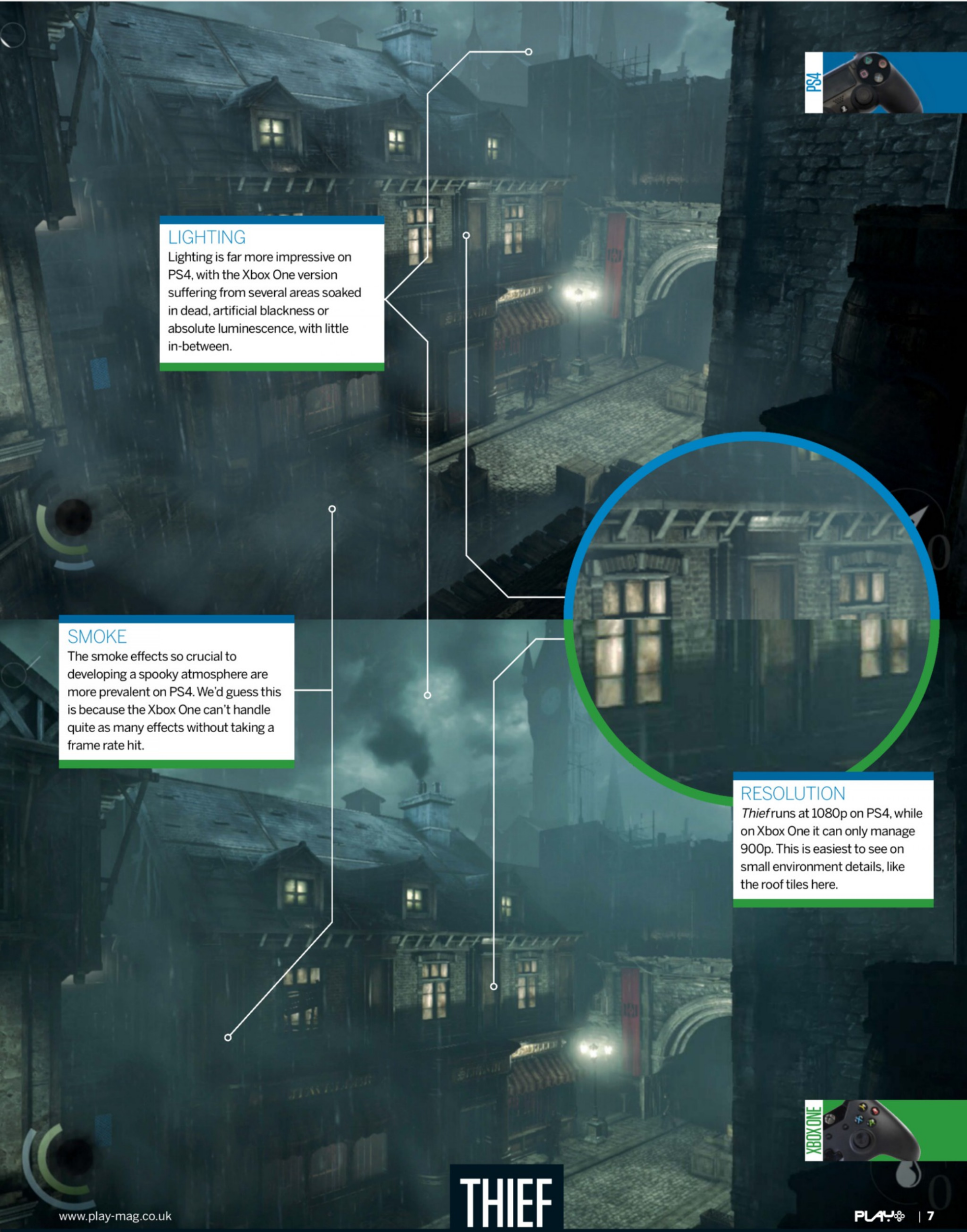
For decades, the console wars have raged on. Friendships have been destroyed, families torn apart, lives ruined, all because a bunch of nerds can't decide on which game-playing box is the best one. Can't we all just get along?

While the concept of grown adults trading slurs over which games machine they prefer is a bit ridiculous, there is value in knowing which machine can provide the best experience. Luckily for us here on **Play**, it's become very obvious, even this early in the generation, that the PlayStation 4 is a better console, objectively, than the Xbox One.

We can attribute this to two main factors: raw power and ease of use for developers. It's a simple fact that the PlayStation 4 is a more powerful console than the Xbox One. While the two consoles share an almost identical CPU, the PS4 has a far stronger graphics processing unit, outputting 1.84 teraflops of performance compared to the Xbone's 1.31. Also, while the Xbox One has 8GB of DDR3 RAM resulting in a memory capacity of 68.3 GB/s, the PS4 has 8GB of GDDR5, leading to a huge capacity of 176.0 GB/s, over twice as much. You simply can't argue with the numbers: the PS4 is a more powerful machine.

The second factor is how accessible the system's architecture is to developers. Last generation, cross-platform games tended to look better on the Xbox 360, despite the system having less power than the PlayStation 3. This is because the 360 was much easier to develop games for, using PC-based architecture while the PS3 had the obtuse and difficult Cell processor. Sony has learned from its mistakes, the PS4 sporting a PC-based architecture that, by accounts from developers, is far easier and more intuitive to use. Interestingly, the Xbox One appears to have become harder to use in comparison.

Everyone loves positive reinforcement, especially when they know they are right, so we've taken a look at a few games that are scientifically *better* on PS4 than any other console. It's nice knowing you made the right choice, isn't it?



PS4

LIGHTING

Lighting is far more impressive on PS4, with the Xbox One version suffering from several areas soaked in dead, artificial blackness or absolute luminescence, with little in-between.

SMOKE

The smoke effects so crucial to developing a spooky atmosphere are more prevalent on PS4. We'd guess this is because the Xbox One can't handle quite as many effects without taking a frame rate hit.

RESOLUTION

Thief runs at 1080p on PS4, while on Xbox One it can only manage 900p. This is easiest to see on small environment details, like the roof tiles here.

XBOX ONE

PS3

FPS

The PS4 version is a silky smooth 60fps, while the PS3 has to settle for 30, despite looking worse.

RESOLUTION

The most obvious difference, and easy to see. The PS4 version runs at 1080p, while the PS3 version is internally scaled to reach an artificial 720p. Take a look at the text on the sign for an easy example of the difference.

SKY

Only the PS4 version features 'atmosphere simulation', a feature simulating sky and cloud patterns in real time. Every other version uses a basic skybox.

PS4

METAL GEAR SOLID V

LIGHTING

The game makes extensive use of raytracing and cubemaps to create sophisticated, impressive lighting effects. What does this mean? Basically, all lighting is generated in real-time, with nothing pre-baked.

RESOLUTION

Yep, *Killzone Shadow Fall* runs at a consistent 1080p/30fps for the campaign. Good luck getting that to work on an Xbox One!

MODELS

The models in *Shadow Fall* contain around 40,000 polygons, four times as many as those in *Killzone 3*. Character textures are also twice the resolution.

PS4

KILLZONE SHADOW FALL

PS4

DEBRIS

We can see higher quality textures on the various bits of debris floating through space. The grey sections in the upper right are easy to differentiate.

GUN

Looking at the gun in this picture is the easiest way to grasp the difference between the two versions. The textures are clearer on PS4, a testament to the higher resolution.

ODIN

Take a look at the writing on the space station, another good example of the difference in resolutions. People might claim the difference between 720p and 1080p is minimal, but it really does make a difference.

XBOX ONE

CALL OF DUTY: GHOSTS

PS4

DRAW DISTANCE

In our experience, the draw distance on PS4 is greater than on Xbox One. In a world as beautiful and vast as this, it makes a large difference.

RESOLUTION

The PS4 version is running at 1080p while the Xbox One can only manage a measly 900p. We are starting to sound like a broken record, huh?

FOLIAGE

Bushes and plants seem more plentiful on PS4 and less prone to pop-in. The way bushes move in the wind is extremely impressive.

XBOX ONE

2969 R

ASSASSIN'S CREED IV: BLACK FLAG

BATTLE OF THE GENERATION

TWO CONSOLES ENTER, ONLY ONE CAN LEAVE...

SALES & MARKET PERFORMANCE

EUROPEAN RELEASE DATE

22 NOV	23 NOV	24 NOV

25 NOV	26 NOV	27 NOV	28 NOV	29 NOV

LAUNCH PRICE

£500

£429

UNITS SOLD

6 MILLION

4 MILLION

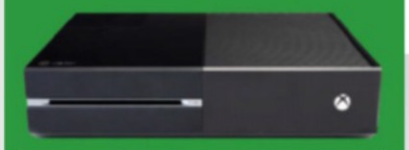
BEST-SELLING GAME

KILLZONE SHADOW FALL
2.1 million units

TITANFALL
(assuming it beats *COD*'s 1.5 million units)

£349

£0

	PS4		Xbox One
		FORMAT	
	Octa-Core (2 quad-core modules) AMD x86-64 "Jaguar"-based Shared 4MB L2 cache (Cores 0-3: 2MB, Cores 4-7: 2MB) Secondary low-power processor (for background tasks)	**CPU** (central processing unit)	Octa-Core (2 quad-core modules) AMD x86-64 'Jaguar'-based @ 1.75 GHz Shared 4MB L2 cache (Cores 0-3: 2MB, Cores 4-7: 2MB)
	AMD Radeon 'Liverpool' 1152 shaders @ 800 MHz (1.84 TFLOP/s) Fillrates: 25.6 Gpixel/s, 57.6 Gtexel/s	**GPU** (graphics processing unit)	AMD Radeon 768 shaders @ 853 MHz (1.31 TFLOP/s) Fillrates: 13.6 Gpixel/s, 40.9 Gtexel/s
	8 GB GDDR5 RAM @ 5500 MHz (176.0 GB/s) 256 MB (2 GB) DDR3 RAM (for background tasks)	**RAM** (random access memory)	8 GB DDR3 RAM @ 2133 MHz (68.3 GB/s) (5 GB available for games) 32 MB eSRAM (on-die)

WHAT DOES IT ALL MEAN?

The PS4 has

157%

better RAM speed than the Xbox One

The PS4 has 40% more graphics processing power than the Xbox One

The PS4 has sold 50% more than the Xbox One

THE PS4 IS A BETTER CONSOLE THAN THE XBOX ONE

FUTURE ATTRACTIONS

WATCH DOGS

An industry insider leaking info on Twitter claimed that *Watch Dogs* will run at 900p/30fps on Xbox One while reaching 1080p/30fps on PS4. Treat it strictly as rumour at the moment, but considering what else we've seen, it's not unrealistic.

THE WITCHER 3

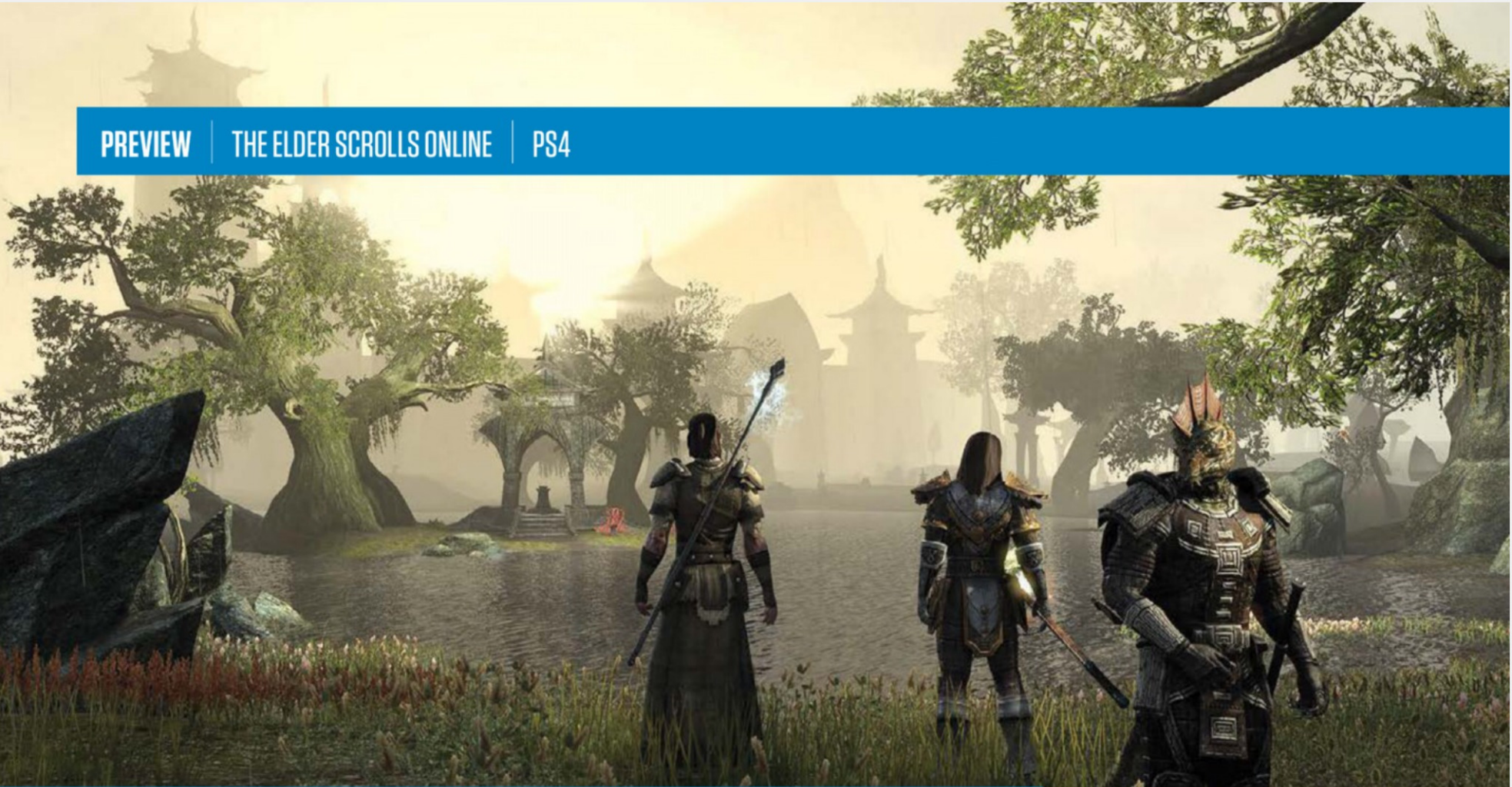
The same guy on Twitter also let slip that *The Witcher 3* will run on Xbox One at 720p/30fps but hit at least 900p/30fps on PS4, with the team in Poland apparently working hard at increasing the res on PlayStation further to 1080p.

METAL GEAR SOLID V: THE PHANTOM PAIN

Given the differences between the Xbox One and PS4 versions of *Ground Zeroes* and that *The Phantom Pain* is running on the same engine, it's not unrealistic to suspect the same differences: 1080p/30fps on PS4, 720p/30fps on Xbox One.

DESTINY

A tester on the alpha of Bungie's upcoming shooter claimed that the PS4 version looked "sharper" than that of the Xbox One, implying a difference in resolution. We've nothing more to go on, but honestly, would anyone be surprised?



ETA JUNE | **DEV** ZENIMAX ONLINE STUDIOS | **PUB** BETHESDA | **TWITTER** @TESONLINE

The Elder Scrolls Online

Has Bethesda's MMO taken an arrow to the knee?

PS4

AS THE RELEASE of *The Elder Scrolls Online* inches closer, we've managed to get some hands-on time with the closed beta. With a wealth of great-looking MMOs coming to PS4 in the near future, *TESO* really needs to stand out and make an impact. It does, sort of, but not necessarily for all the right reasons. Set 1,000 years before *Skyrim*, *TESO* will contain the entire continent of Tamriel, including every land seen in a previous *Elder Scrolls* game – Skyrim, Cyrodiil, Morrowind, Daggerfall and more, as well as plenty of areas never seen before. For the first time, players can grasp the huge scale of the world. Thing is, a lot of this content will be locked off until later expansions and patches. We don't know how much of the land is going to be available at launch, but most of our initial exploring took place in a very familiar-looking Skyrim. All the classic *Elder Scrolls* races are playable, aside from Imperials. Otherwise, you can be whoever you want – a hairy Nord, a reptilian Argonian or a feline Khajiit among other choices. Character customisation has been greatly expanded from *Skyrim*, with a wealth of sliders and variables making it easier to not be a really ugly bastard. These races fall under three factions, facilitating PVP on a grand scale, although our brief beta foray was a strictly PVE experience.

△○×□ It's great to see more MMOs coming to console. It's a genre we love, and a whole new bunch of gamers getting to try it out makes is happy.

www.imagineshop.co.uk

IN THE MEANTIME...

Skyrim We still haven't finished *Skyrim*, and we doubt we will get the chance now before *TESO*. There's just never enough time...

△○×□ As usual, you can take your pick from first- and third-person viewpoints.

"THE GAME PLAYS LIKE A STRANGE MIXTURE OF SKYRIM AND TRADITIONAL MMOS"

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

Explore all of Tamriel! Seriously, this game's gonna be big.

If this one goes well, we're likely to see a lot more console MMOs.

Play as one of four initial classes, with a bunch of specialisation options.

You can be an Argonian! They're the lizardy dudes. We love those guys.

First revealed as a third-person title that seemed to have more in common with *World Of Warcraft* than the games it follows, *TESO* has changed considerably since its reveal last year. What we are presented with now is much more reminiscent of an *Elder Scrolls* game, with a first-person viewpoint and the signature left to block, right to attack controls. Third-person is still available if you want it, but any *Elder Scrolls* fan will rightly tell you that first is the only way to play.

Players choose one of four classes to begin with, which can later specialise in three separate ways. Dragon Knights are your tanking warrior class, while Templars mix melee, magic and healing. Sorcerers are pretty self-explanatory, and Nightblades can become stealthy rogues or ranged hunters depending on how the player specs up. We didn't get to play enough to reach the point where we started specialising, but if each class has three different sub-classes, a total of 12 unique ways to play is a great start.

The game plays like a strange mixture of *Skyrim* and a traditional MMO; unsurprising perhaps, considering that's exactly what it is, but it's still feeling awkward right now. Without large damage numbers popping up above enemies,attacks seem to lack impact. While this is a common problem across the genre, it feels like more of an issue here as the combat itself feels weak and ineffectual. Your weapon phases through an enemy with no physical presence, seemingly having no real effect. It's not a deal-breaker, but it is unfortunate, and it's an issue we hope is fixed before launch.

There are plenty of quests and other assorted bits of nonsense, and in essence, that's what *The Elder Scrolls Online* is. When you remove the series' trappings, it's a standard MMO. With games like *PlanetSide 2* and *EverQuest Next* sitting on the horizon – and great games like *Final Fantasy XIV* and *DC Universe Online* already available – we just don't know if *TESO* is doing enough to make a mark. It's good, but with such competition, is good enough?

Sam Smith

THE ELDER SCROLLS ONLINE is being developed by ZeniMax Online Studios. Visit the web site for more information: **www.elderscrollsonline.com**

△○×□ Make no mistake; this is still a traditional MMO. If they bored you before, this will be no different.

△○×□ Sure, you could pinch a jeep or commandeer a tank. But that's nothing compared to the majesty of cruising about on horseback...

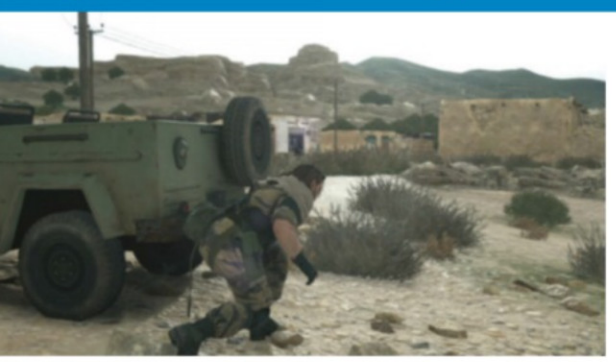
WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

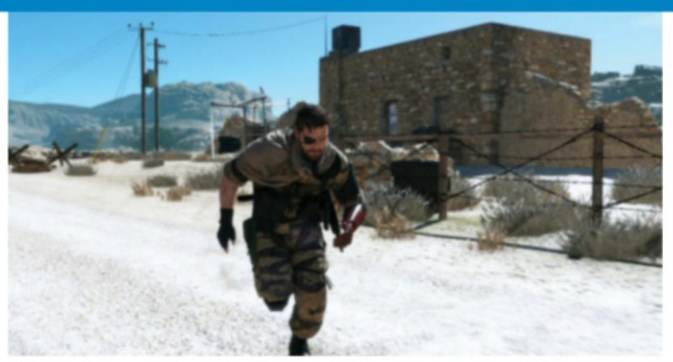
△ IT'S *METAL GEAR SOLID V.*

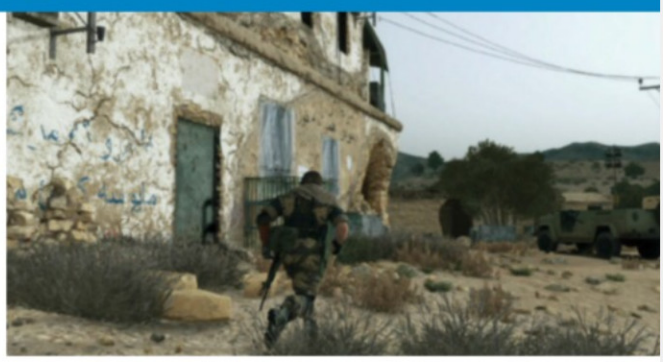
□ *Metal Gear* goes open-world, for the first time.

✕ It looks amazing, thanks to the Fox Engine.

○ Learn how Snake finally becomes Big Boss.







△○×□ Crawling around in the dirt remains an invaluable stealth technique, made all the more useful by Snake's new dive move.

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Metal Gear Solid V: Ground Zeroes
Duh, it's the prequel. Get up to speed with the story, discover open world stealth and learn all the cool new things you can do in *MGSV*.

ETA TBC | **DEV** KOJIMA PRODUCTIONS | **PUB** KONAMI | **TWITTER** @HIDEO_KOJIMA_EN

Metal Gear Solid V: The Phantom Pain

Afghanistan is a big place...

PS4

NOW, THE REAL wait begins. *Ground Zeroes* has finally arrived to help sate our appetite, but it may have actually had the opposite affect. We want *Metal Gear Solid V*, and we want it NOW. Mild spoilers for *Ground Zeroes* follow, so avoid until you've finished it...

We now know how Snake enters the nine-year coma that spans the two titles: an assault on his Mother Base by government organisation XOF. After spending so long building up his own army and homeland, you can bet Snake wants revenge.

The first part of this seems to involve rescuing old buddy Kazuhira Miller from Afghanistan. As we've seen in trailers, Miller is in a bad shape, down an eye, leg and arm thanks to torture at the hands of his captors. Once Snake finds his pal, it seems the game will start in earnest, with players once more building up an army to take down Zero, Cipher and XOF.

Ground Zeroes has given us a crash course in how the game will play. Take a look at our *GZ* review for more info, but the basic idea is *Peace Walker*, refined. Mechanically, we expect *Ground Zeroes* and *The Phantom Pain* to be identical. All the work going into *TPP* at this point will be creating the story and assets.

We were lucky enough to take a look inside Kojima Productions' offices recently, from the camera room where each actor is snapped from every conceivable angle and scanned into the game, to the motion-capture studio where those same actors don bodysuits and go through the motions – literally. There's a reason *Ground Zeroes* looks so damn good, and we can't wait to see what KojiPro can do with its incredible technology in a full-length game.

Anyone expecting *The Phantom Pain* this year might be disappointed. With the huge amount of work going into it, we wouldn't expect to see the 'real' *Metal Gear Solid V* until later 2015, at the earliest. Plenty of time to 100 per cent *Ground Zeroes* while you wait.

Sam Smith

METAL GEAR SOLID V: THE PHANTOM PAIN is being developed by Kojima Productions. Check the website for more details: **www.konami.jp/mgs5**

△○×□ This all looks very grounded and realistic, especially compared to the crazy imagery we saw in the original trailer for *The Phantom Pain*.

"GROUND ZEROES HAS GIVEN US A CRASH COURSE IN HOW THE GAME WILL PLAY. WHICH IS TO SAY, VERY WELL"

READ ME

Square Enix's somewhat underperforming MMORPG is taken back to the lab, tweaked and tinkered with, emerging far tighter and deeper than any other MMO on consoles.

ETA APRIL | **DEV** SQUARE ENIX | **PUB** SQUARE ENIX | **TWITTER** @SQUAREENIX

Final Fantasy XIV: A Realm Reborn

The revived MMO levels up on PS4

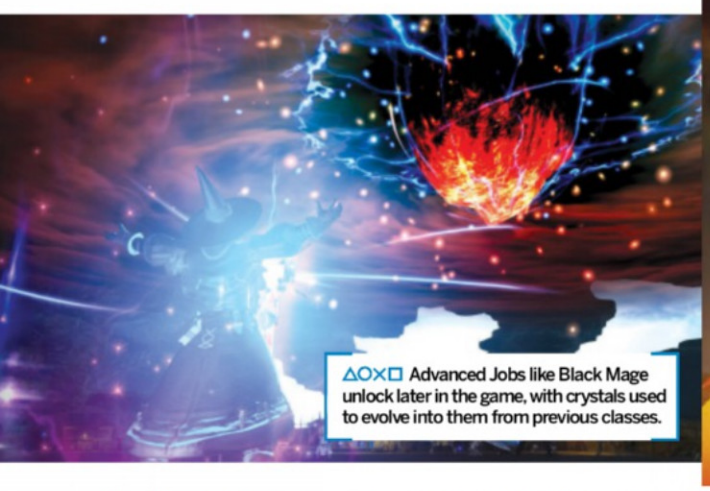
PS3

YOU'D BE FORGIVEN for flicking back to the cover and checking the issue number to make sure this was indeed the latest issue of **Play** – with reviews of *Dead Nation* and *Rayman Legends* plus this here preview of a game that's been out for the best part of a year, there's certainly some kind of gaming time anomaly going on. It's all the PlayStation 4's fault, with developers keen to shove new releases and remastered old games alike on Sony's new platform, the upshot being that we end up talking a lot about games that you've probably already played. At least in this case, though, Square's successfully relaunched MMO has evolved at such a rate that it has given us loads to talk about as its imminent PS4 launch draws closer.

Let's start with the painfully obvious – *FFXIV* looks better on PS4 than on PS3. Did we just blow your minds? Sorry about that. The more interesting part of this revelation, though, is that it brings the console version on a par with the beautiful PC version and while it can't quite hold steady at 60fps like it does on a top-end PC, it only really dips when there's stuff going on everywhere at once – several players we met during the recent beta even commented that it runs better on PS4 than on their relatively powerful PCs. Having seen a Crystal Tower raid on PS3 (where it descends into a slideshow at some points), this improved stability is a godsend. It's no longer 'just about playable' and it's no longer an excuse for being rubbish, so learning the dungeons and the game itself are more crucial than ever for console players. Not that they weren't before, of course – the ropey frame rate just offered the lazy a scapegoat, but no longer.

And that's not the only excuse to be thrown out of the window, either. We've come to love Square's clever implementation of DualShock-based hotbar controls, but there are others who aren't so fond of it. Targeting with any degree of accuracy can be a pain at times, making healing in particular somewhat tricky with a controller. So if you'd rather get the classic MMO experience, Square has you covered – you can connect a mouse and keyboard to your PS4 and play it that way, ensuring exactly the same benefits that have made the genre far bigger on PC than any other platform. There's even an odd halfway house option, where the DualShock 4's touchpad can be used as a virtual mouse in addition to the regular controls. As with the default controller layout, it feels fiddly and alien at first but give it a few hours and you'll be multitasking like a boss.

Not so much new for the PS4 version as new for everyone playing *Final Fantasy XIV* is the new *Through The Maelstrom* expansion, the latest in a string of regular updates that Square has promised will continue to arrive every two or three months.



△○×□ Advanced Jobs like Black Mage unlock later in the game, with crystals used to evolve into them from previous classes.

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- A proven success on PlayStation 3, now even prettier thanks to the power of PS4.
- Switch class by changing weapon. Skills and stats carry over from other Jobs, too.
- Control options range from solid controller layout to full mouse/keyboard support.
- Organic group play options join traditional forms for a very social experience.

www.imagineshop.co.uk

△○×□ As well as acting as mounts, chocobos can be trained to join you in battle, where they can take on support, healing and damage roles.

△○×□ Raid bosses are as punishing as you'd hope and expect – without the right party, you're pretty much doomed.

These tend to focus on end-game content, with new story missions that expand the narrative beyond its level 50 conclusion in addition to a bunch of new raids and gear. The last update, *A Realm Awoken*, added an amazing amount of content and this one goes even further, bringing another new Primal battle against the mighty Leviathan as well as new Hard and Extreme versions of older bosses and raids. New dungeon The Amdapor Township has been described as the toughest so far, with a new type of Tomestone (end-game currency) the reward for those who prove themselves. We'll also finally be getting vanity gear in the form of Glamours, so high-level dungeons will no longer be a procession of characters decked out in all the same gear.

Despite its shortcomings due to taking a high-spec PC game and somehow getting it to work on an aging console, we've absolutely loved our time in Eorzea on PS3, so the opportunity to upgrade to PS4 is one we were always going to leap on. Square made this even easier for us by announcing that PS3 owners would be able to trade up for the PS4 version for free, with character transfers beginning as soon as we hit the second phase of the PS4 beta (so now).

There's more good news in the fact that Remote Play is supported throughout. Not that we'd recommend adding any extra latency to tough boss battles and raids lest your party call for your head on a platter after the fourth or fifth inevitable wipe, but it's a cool feature for crafting, gathering and social stuff. That said, we did find the screen just a little too small and the resolution too low to make out the text, meaning that it's nigh impossible to control if you don't know your hotbar inside out. It's a welcome addition and we can see ourselves using it for mining or mass crafting with a movie on in the background, but that's the extent of its practical usefulness.

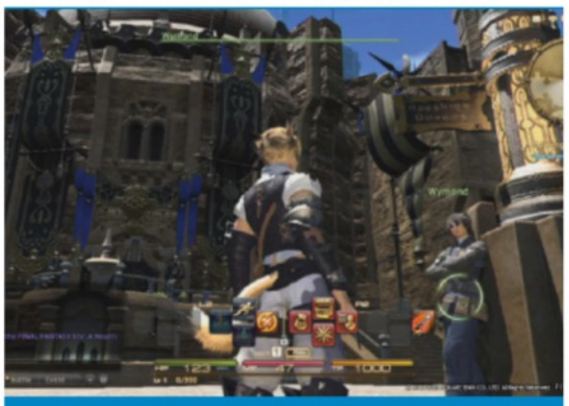
Still, with its vastly improved frame rate and 1080p the new standard – not to mention a plethora of input methods to account for players of all tastes and experience levels – this will be the best version of *A Realm Reborn* going unless you've recently spent several grand on a PC. And with additional content coming every couple of months, Eorzea is only going to keep getting bigger, too.

For years it has been said that traditional MMOs don't work on consoles, but Square has done an outstanding job of proving that to be false. With a little thought, a lot of time and even more money, the format can (and does) work perfectly. We just wonder how long it'll take for Blizzard to realise this, see how well *FFXIV* is doing on PlayStation and start revving the engine for a *World Of Warcraft* release...

Luke Albigés

PAY TO PLAY

Two million subscribers and rising – the model still works



While some will turn up their noses at the idea of paying a monthly fee after the initial 30-day trial, the simple truth here is that a subscription model can still work if a game has the content to back it up. And with new stuff being added every few months, Square is doing its best to ensure that is the case. It's the kind of thing you can drop into and out of, too – subscribe for a month to mess around with the new gear and dungeons, leave it for a bit and return when the next content drop arrives. We've paid since launch, and we don't regret a thing.

FINAL FANTASY XIV: A REALM REBORN arrives on PS4 very soon indeed. Check out **www.finalfantasyxiv.com** while the game installs.

ETA 2014 | **DEV** MACHINEGAMES | **PUB** BETHESDA | **TWITTER** @WOLFENSTEIN

Wolfenstein: The New Order

Classic franchise, classic gameplay

PS4

ALSO COMING TO PS3

IT'S AMAZING THAT the ideas that feel freshest in today's fast-moving industry are often those lifted straight from the past. Just look at *Final Fantasy*, doing its best to push the envelope and reinvent the RPG genre but meanwhile, everyone is calling 3DS sister title *Bravely Default* the best *FF* in years. And with the shooter market more competitive than it has ever been and military man-following, regenerating health and cinematic presentation everywhere, it's oddly refreshing to play a first-person action game that just hands you a pair of ludicrous weapons, points you in roughly the right direction and lets you go all *Doom* on wave after wave of bad guys. It's a reminder of the days before the FPS genre became a shameless procession of XP-laced copycats grabbing wildly for *COD* dollars, and a damn entertaining one it is too.

The original *Wolfenstein 3D* came along before anybody took videogames seriously at all but every franchise entry since has, as visuals have improved and tone shifted, had to be slightly more delicate in its handling of its subject matter. Only slightly, mind – there are still zombies and tesla weapons and all sorts of other silliness – but still, some bright spark at MachineGames realised that an alternate history timeline would allow *Wolfenstein* to do whatever the hell it wants with its Nazi opposition. And *The New Order* is a game that clearly delights in doing just that, as you can probably tell from all the robot dogs and Nazi mechs stomping all over the place.

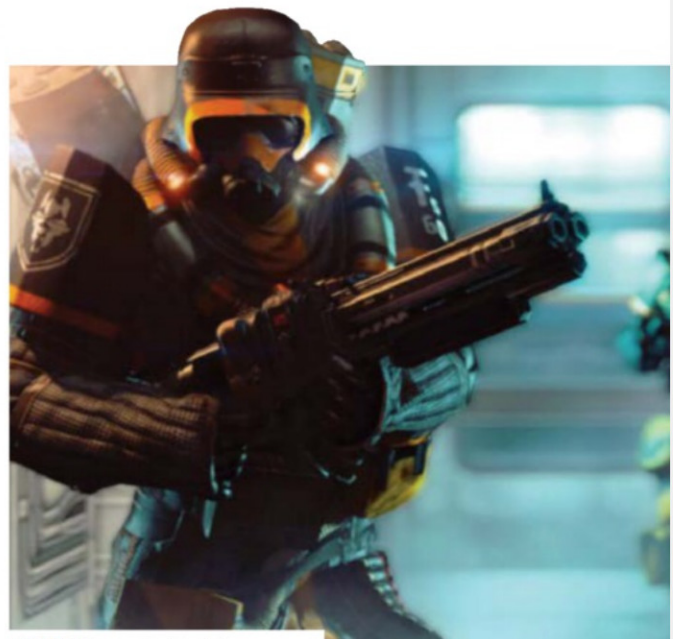
Simple it may be but feat not – it's still not a case of simply holding forwards with the triggers held down to unscrupulously mow down everything stupid enough to wander into your sights. Stealth is also an option – if you can believe such madness – and if you can slink around enemy patrols, you needn't murder literally everything that moves. Things tend to kick off eventually, but it's good to know that branching paths and secret routes make for something other than one great long killbox, assuming you *want* something other than one great long killbox.

While it's a mechanical return to much simpler times for the genre (collectible health kits are back, for those who really can't stand the sight of strawberry jam), there's still the odd concession to *The New Order* being a contemporary release. The nonsensical story is given enough of a push that it's almost as if the devs think people care about narrative in *Wolfenstein*, while there are a few odd scripted moments that give your trigger finger a rest – again, maybe not the best idea in a game whose primary currencies are headshots and toe tags.

Still, so long as these are rare enough and the emphasis placed firmly on blowing the hell out of a whole bunch of timeline-ruining fascists, all will be well – that side of the game is great fun, especially with all the man-following going on in all the other PS4 shooters. In any case, when is dual-wielding shotguns *not* fun? Exactly.

Luke Albigés

WOLFENSTEIN: THE NEW ORDER is coming to PS3 and PS4 some time later this year. Find out more at **www.wolfenstein.com**



△○×□ These robo-Nazis have something of the Helghast about them. In terms of design that is, not politics...

"BRANCHING PATHS AND SECRET ROUTES MAKE FOR SOMETHING OTHER THAN ONE LONG KILLBOX"

www.imagineshop.co.uk

WHAT YOU'RE SAYING...

if they give me a free copy then I might care :) lol
@FrankieADZ

I love the Wolfenstein games because as a native German it's funny to hear US voice actors trying to speak German
@irgei

I'm hoping this one will live up to its ancestors, as the last one wasn't really that great.
@**HankBizzle**

Looks like a great game I'm happy there's no multiplayer in it as well some game are better with out
@**Unknownz**

The last incarnation was bollocks.
John Murray

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- An all-action approach, akin to the classic first-person shooters of old.
- Meaty boomsticks that feel like they're going to take your arms off.
- The bleak, oppressive yet interesting alternate history timeline.
- Giant Nazi mechs to blow into the middle of last Century.

ETA 21 MAY | **DEV** ACCESS GAMES | **PUB** SQUARE ENIX | **TWITTER** @ACCESSGAMES

Drakengard 3

Meet Zero the anti-hero

PS3

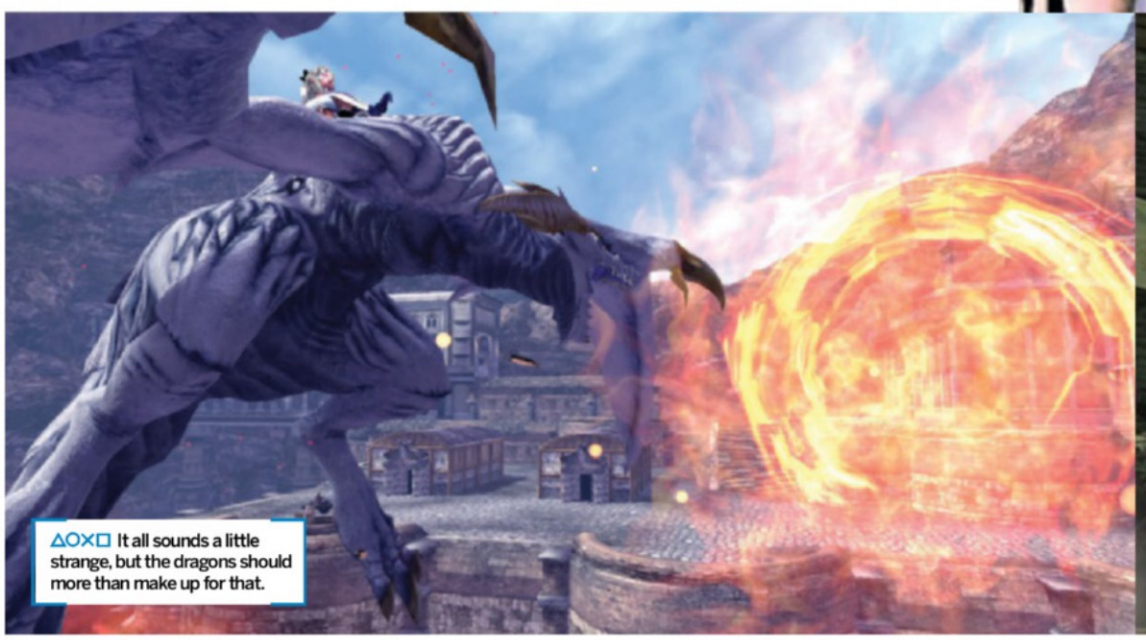
THIS IS A game that we never expected to see. Not because the last two *Drakengard* games were particularly lacking, but because Cavia, the studio behind the series, was disbanded back in 2010. This wasn't before it released *Nier*, a pseudo-sequel that was set over 1,000 years after the events of the original game, but considering the middling reputation of the series in general, it seemed like we'd seen the last of Caim and Angelus. We're all for second chances, though, and so when Access Games – the studio behind *Lord Of Arcana* and cult classic *Deadly Premonition* – announced that it'd be working with former Cavia employees on a *Drakengard* prequel, we were quietly optimistic.

The Japanese-language version of *Drakengard 3* launched last year, so we already have some understanding of its story and gameplay. It's set in the same world as the previous games and casts the player as Zero. Not to be confused with the Maverick Hunter that's currently terrorising the *Ultimate Marvel Vs Capcom 3* scene with his tricky lightning loops, this divine being is one of five Intoners that descended from the heavens. She and her sisters used the inherent magic of their singing to put a stop to the conflict that has engulfed the land, and with nothing better to do after restoring the peace, they divided up the world and became humanity's new rulers.

What makes *Drakengard 3* more interesting than your typical anime adventure is the fact that Zero is the one baying for blood. After teaming up with a dragon named Mikhail, Zero starts a one-woman crusade against her sisters after claiming that the world only needs one Intoner. It's a bit of a dick move whichever way you slice it, but the reasoning behind Zero's actions will likely become clear as she tracks down her siblings and sticks them with the pointy end. And with Access Games sticking to the action-RPG template that characterised the previous games, the body count is likely to rank in the thousands.

To say that *Drakengard 3* looks a bit bloody would be an understatement. Zero is dressed all in white and even has a flower that blooms from one of her eye

△○×□ As well as a flower growing out of her eye, Zero has a prosthetic arm. Makes you wonder what else she's hiding...



△○×□ It all sounds a little strange, but the dragons should more than make up for that.

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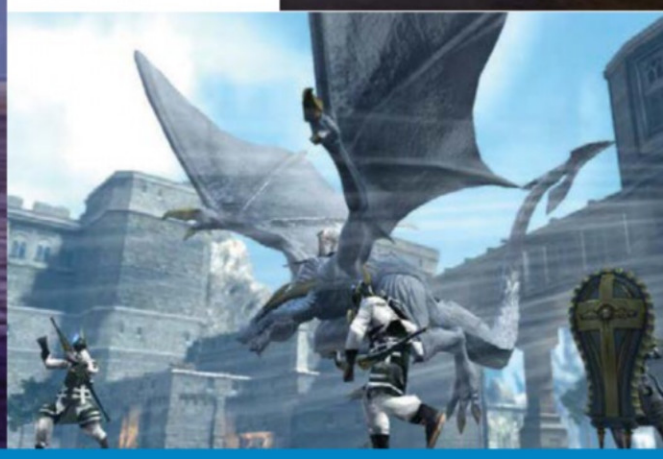
Nier "A game so burdened with poor design choices and outdated mechanics that some won't be able to see the ingenuity through the fit of technical hiccups." **games™**

"ONE THING THAT DANTE, KRATOS AND SAMANOSUKE DIDN'T HAVE WAS A FIRE-BREATHING ALLY"

△○×□ *Drakengard 3* will only be available as a PSN digital release in Europe.



WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

△ Character designs are by Kimihiko Fujisaka. He worked on the first two *Drakengard* games.

□ Zero's sisters all have names that range from One to Five. Two is the most cheerful.

✕ Two to Five each have a male Apostle that will eventually join Zero...

○ Their job is to protect their Intoner and satiate their high sex drives. Seriously.

sockets, but the instant she charges into a battalion of soldiers, her pristine image is quickly smeared with buckets of blood. The basics of combat will be familiar to anyone who's played a hack-and-slash as it sits somewhere between the horde mentality of *Dynasty Warriors* and the offensive flexibility of *Devil May Cry*. Zero can switch between swords, spears and other bladed weaponry on the fly and the enemies range from lowly infantry to towering golems.

To add a bit of flair to the combat, the game also features a gauge that fills up as Zero gets stained in blood. Once maxed out, the player can put Zero into a powered-up state where she moves faster and does more damage. If that sounds a bit *Devil Trigger*, that's because it is, but one thing that Dante, Kratos and Samanosuke didn't have was a fire-breathing ally. Mikhail can be commanded to torch a group of enemies on the ground and he can also be ridden in one of the aerial levels. These don't look quite as sophisticated as the *Panzer Dragoon* equivalent but hopefully they'll offer a secondary style of play that compliments the central swordplay.

Without having had a chance to road test *Drakengard 3* for ourselves, it's hard to say whether the game handles more like *Bayonetta* or *Onechanbara*. Hopefully it's more in line with the former, but going by the track record of *Drakengard* and Access Games, we're expecting something a little rough around the edges yet undeniably stylish. The real test will be whether *Drakengard 3* can drag players away from *Dark Souls II*. There's only a two-month gap between their respective release dates. That's long enough to crave something different, but only if *Drakengard 3* amounts to deliver something great rather than just okay.

Matt Edwards

WHAT YOU'RE SAYING...

I'm going to be very upset if there's not going to be a piano book for Drakengard 3 coming out in the next few years
@peisicosia

The only thing I'm not liking about Drakengard 3 is that the term waifu has increased in usage within the fandom by like 999999999%
@utahimeclaus

I'm amazed by Maaya Uchida; the way she voiced Zero in Drakengard 3 and Rikka Takanashi in Love, Chunibyo & Other Delusions...
@zackreese

DRAKENGARD 3 is being developed by Access Games. Head over to the Square Enix website for details: **www.square-enix.com**

BLAST FROM THE PAST

UEFA Euro 2008 was the game that signalled *FIFA*'s latest formula. Will EA Canada do the same with its next dabble?

ETA 17 APRIL | **DEV** EA CANADA | **PUB** ELECTRONIC ARTS | **TWITTER** @EASPORTSFIFA

2014 FIFA World Cup Brazil

Still waiting for Roy Hodgson's call? It's probably best to stay at home

PS3

UNLIKE ENGLISH FANS mindlessly tipping the Three Lions for South American success, EA Canada's bi-annual *FIFA* updates are not an exercise in futility. Who can forget the flow-altering weather effects of *UEFA Euro 2008*, or the enhanced penalty system implemented for *2010 South Africa*? While it would be foolish to expect a major overhaul in *2014 FIFA World Cup Brazil*, the next update promises to keep the action evolving.

A full-priced sideways step may disinterest many, but tournament-based games allow EA Canada a greater sense of creativity, freedom and focus without fear of failure. Minuscule changes, the type that will make casual players say "it's no bloody different, Dave," can be tested in full knowledge the title will rocket to the top of the charts. If EA somehow ruins the successful formula of *FIFA 14*, a checklist of 203 officially licensed nations, 19 managers and 21 stadiums ensure the hubbub of World Cup month will sell like Twister lollies at Copacabana beach.

Buzzwords were crammed into the game's announcement, but what alterations should this game offer on the virtual pitch? EA has focused on the physicality of defenders across recent years – telling gamers their backline has the intelligence and power to deal with pace in *FIFA 14* – but this is only true intermittently. Although the bulging horse thighs of Vincent Kompany are more than equipped to send wheat-legged foes like Luis Suarez tumbling, the Belgian behemoth cannot deal with long balls over his head.

This is most obvious from kick-off, where a floated pass from the halfway line often lands at an onrushing striker's feet as he perfectly times a run beyond the defence. Brazil's addition of over-the-back headers is destined to stop the scandalous amount of headed goals from corners, but grabbing a quick piggyback ride isn't going to help when centre-backs are face-on with their tormentors.

Added brains is needed with haste. We'd like to see players intelligently track runs, perhaps

"IF YOU'VE JUST GOTTEN OVER THE VUVUZELA, WAIT UNTIL THE CAXIROLA SHAKES TO YOUR EVERY MOVE"

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- There's something a little extra special about a World Cup-themed game.
- EA is focusing on the older console's larger demographic. No cross-gen shenanigans!
- Camera shots of fans celebrating in Trafalgar Square when England score.
- Different game modes lead a generous package of content.

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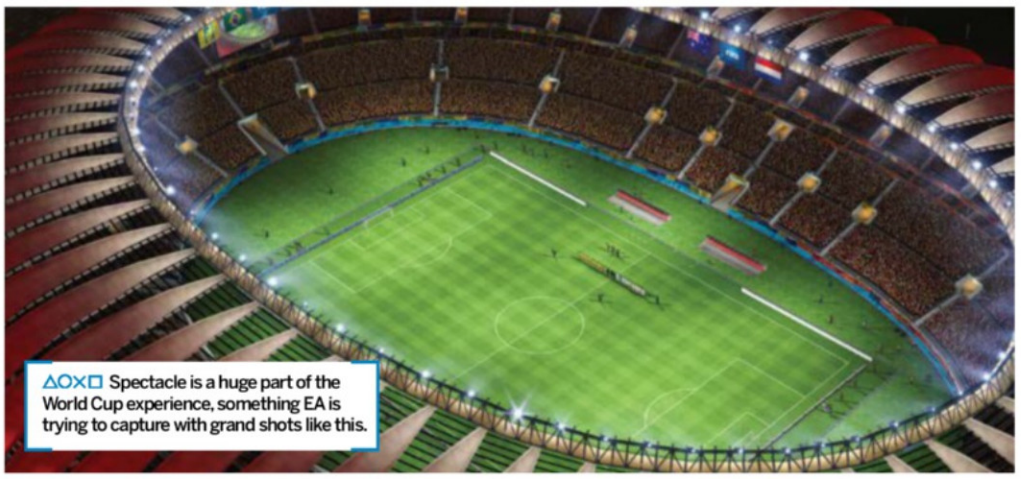
WHERE IT WILL GO WRONG FOR ENGLAND

QUARTER-FINAL VENUE (TBC)
Do we even need to mention the new penalty system at this point?

MANAUS (VS ITALY)
After living up to the nation's ambition by playing ultra-defensive for 89 minutes, a shot from Mario Balotelli squirms through the hands of Joe Hart, who was busy shampooing his mop.

BELO HORIZONTE (VS COSTA RICA)
After Joel Campbell speeds through the defence from an innocuous through ball, Wayne Rooney angrily shouts down the camera and directly into Adrian Chiles's soul.

SAO PAULO (VS URUGUAY)
Luis Suarez uses the game's improved dribbling to flummox Phil Jagielka, before utilising a push of the right stick to flick the ball up into Hart's net, who was busy conditioning his mop.



△○×□ Spectacle is a huge part of the World Cup experience, something EA is trying to capture with grand shots like this.

△○×□ There's an odd pleasure to be found in seeing the players line up and mouth along to their national anthems.

△○×□ Training mini-games return, having worked well in *FIFA* in the past. Who needs boring old loading screens?

initiated through a tactical tweak that allows you to assign intense man-markers during a match. Right now, players are only afforded limited options when reacting to situations once a contest is underway – but that isn't how football works. EA has included a variety of coaches who make the sport interesting, now it should start allowing players to express themselves with the depth and personality of those screaming from the sidelines.

World Class Control is certainly an addition to fuel the argument of sceptics. Although new passing animations, flicks and tricks may be noticeable for those who are yet to try the series on PS4, next-gen aficionados are unlikely to be impressed. Upon launching *FIFA* on the new consoles, EA made a huge point of suggesting older versions cannot process unique responses to each situation. A one-in-one-out system limits the amount of animations available on the PS3 version, so it's likely the developer is swapping visual cues rather than adding them.

Even so, the game is crammed with Brazilian flair. *2010 South Africa* remains a landmark for the series – from its animal-laden backgrounds to music that captured the essence of Bafana Bafana's global celebration – something this effort will build upon. If you've just gotten over the vuvuzela, wait until the caxirola shakes to your every move.

2014 FIFA World Cup shouldn't be dismissed as a money-churning cash-in. The biggest tournament on the planet is a goldmine, sure, but EA Canada has a history of subtly advancing the series through its tournament showpieces. The game may seem like Wayne Rooney returning from his hair transplant to some – different only in presentation – but it promises to continue developing its intelligence under the new barnet.

Nick Akerman

2014 FIFA WORLD CUP BRAZIL is EA Canada's ode to the shiniest trophy in kicky sport. Check **www.easports.com/fifa** for more details.

COMPANY LINE

"Evolve's co-op vs lone wolf formula has created some of the most intense multiplayer matches we've ever experienced."
Chris Ashton, Turtle Rock Studios

ETA Q3 2014 | **DEV** TURTLE ROCK STUDIOS | **PUB** 2K GAMES | **TWITTER** @EVOLVEGAME

Evolve

If it bleeds, we can kill it

PS4

JUST WHO ARE these people still volunteering to colonise far-off jungle planets? For as long as developers have had the technology to render half-decent fangs and tentacles, there's not been one story about humanity jetting off to the stars and then having a lovely time. So don't pity the four hunters in *Evolve* as the monster they're sent in to hunt stamps them into the floor like screaming commemorative coins. That's the price they pay for ignoring decades of speculative fiction.

Not that *Evolve*'s protagonists are as feeble and helpless as the colonists they've been tasked with protecting. The hunters come in four grizzled flavours: a Trapper, armed with a giant harpoon gun, sound spikes for detecting the beast and a *fabulous* handlebar moustache; the Support, who gets a portable shield projector and a beacon that calls in a massive orbital bombardments; the Medic, who packs a medium-ranged healing gun and a sniper rifle that makes the monster temporarily more susceptible to attacks, and the Assault, who makes up in lightning guns and landmines what he lacks in complexity.

To encourage more strategic play, the hunter squad in each round must include one player of each class – you can't all just pick the Medic and set up in the war zone like Médecins Sans Frontieres. And as long as you all play properly and stay together, the dynamic in the squad works very, very well. The monster is extremely dangerous up close – particularly if it can isolate one or two team members – but an Assault trooper receiving both healing and shield from their squadmates puts them on a much more equal footing.

But for our money (all £5.60 of it), it's the monster that steals the show. Here's how it works: at the beginning of each round, the monster gets a ten-second head start to lose itself in the trees. After that time's up, the hunters arrive by dropship and set off on its trail, which is marked by glowing blue footprints. As the monster, you're vulnerable at this early stage, and your goal is escape your pursuers and devour local wildlife to fill your evolution bar.

Escaping the humans is fun. The monster we played, the Goliath, is slow and cumbersome while plodding around on its tree-trunk legs, but can leap incredible distances. If you're smart, you can scrabble up onto a rock or a tree and jump from one to another, making yourself very difficult to track. Once you've lost the humans and have had your fill of alien fauna, you can spin a cocoon for yourself and evolve. This process leaves you vulnerable to attack, but the payoff is certainly worth it. When you emerge, you'll be bigger, meaner and get to pick a new attack (for us it was fire-breathing, naturally). Continue eating and you'll get the chance to evolve one more time into your final form. This is where things get interesting.

Once the monster evolves to that third stage, the game becomes less like *Predator* and more like the final stand from *Aliens*. Instead of stalking and fighting in the jungle, the monster now unlocks a new objective that it can complete to win the game –

△○×□ We look forward to fighting over who gets to be the dude with the incredible moustache. It's *Left 4 Dead*'s Battle For Bill all over again.

"PLAYING AS THE MONSTER, WE MANAGED TO CREEP UP ON THE TEAM UNAWARES, PANIC THEM, DIVIDE THEM, THEN EAT THEM"

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△○×□ The monsters start out fairly small, making feeding on wildlife and avoiding the wandering hunters a key strategy early in a match.

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

△ With a good match of human and alien players, it's anyone's game until the end.

□ The monster can leap away, but upsetting local wildlife can give away its position.

✕ The humans all get jetpacks, which makes getting in and out of scrapes a lot more fun.

○ There's much more to come: including an exciting limited invisibility mechanic.

in our case, bring down some forcefields protecting some juicy, defenceless colonists. Suddenly the hunters are blasting out of the jungle to the objective with their jetpacks, finding vantage spots and digging in for the inevitable showdown.

If the humans can hold it together and work as a team, they can still snatch victory in this endgame. When playing as humans, we made creative use of the harpoon gun, snaring the creature in place while the Support pounded it out of existence with his artillery strike. But playing as the monster, we managed to creep up on the team unawares, panic them, divide them, then eat them. Both experiences were tense, well-balanced and hugely satisfying.

There's a lot more to come with *Evolve* as its Q3 release date approaches – Turtle Rock promises more maps, more variations on the four classes and, most importantly, more monsters. But even after just a couple of hours with this early build, it's clear the *Left 4 Dead* developer is building something special. If you've been twiddling your PS4 thumbsticks waiting for something properly next-gen to get excited about, a safari on *Evolve*'s pitiless forest planet could be just the ticket.

Rich Wordsworth

EVOLVE is being developed by Turtle Rock Studios. Check the website for more details: **www.evolvegame.com**

ANATOMY OF... RYU

He's probably the most iconic character in the entire beat-'em-up genre, which is a little odd since he's dressed in perhaps the most generic fighting attire imaginable. With USFIV just around the corner, we thought we'd investigate what makes him such a strong frontman for Capcom's flagship fighter

HE'S EFFORTLESSLY COOL

Even before he borrowed Chris Redfield's impossible arms for *Street Fighter IV*, Ryu was a badass. Calm, focused and striving to constantly hone his fighting skills, he's as straight an arrow as you'll find in a fighter, yet he doesn't come across as boring as many 'good guy' beat-'em-up heroes often tend to. Bonus points for that.

HE'LL FIGHT ANYONE

Most fighting game characters are out to floor a rival or get revenge for some reason. And although Ryu does have a rivalry with Sagat (as well as a friendlier one with Ken), his main goal is to perfect his art and to do that, he'll throw down with *anyone*. Iron Man, Phoenix Wright, Wolverine, Dante, Hulk... hell, even Galactus.

HE'S SIMPLE

Ryu's classic move set is the framework for the modern fighting arsenal – a ranged attack, an anti-air and an advancing special. Nothing fancy (assuming spinning around mid-air isn't fancy), yet even with what seems like a rudimentary tool set at his disposal, Ryu is a beast and has an answer for everything. That answer, in case you were wondering, is extreme violence.

HE'S NOT CHEAP

Actually, 'he's not Ken' would have been an equally fitting headline, although Akuma too takes liberties with the move set Ryu laid down in the Eighties. Hell, everybody does. This is the 'easy mode' character template that will be followed for years. Air fireballs? Flaming dragon punches? Please. Ryu needs none of this nonsense.

ETA JUNE | **DEV** CAPCOM | **PUB** CAPCOM | **TWITTER** @YOSHI_ONOCHIN

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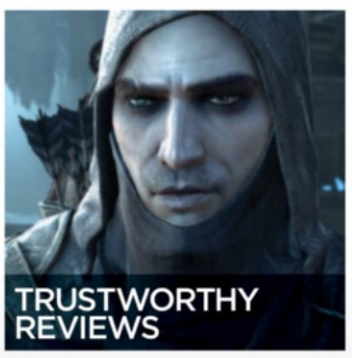

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"BEAUTY IN VIDEOGAMES IS NOT ENOUGH TO WARRANT HIGH PRAISE WITHOUT SOMETHING ELSE GOING ON"

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- A mix of 2D and 3D animation has been used to help bring the world to life.
- A whole bunch of real sounds were actually recorded: blades, glass, instruments, etc
- Aurora's hair has had the fluid particle treatment, using 3D model tentacles.
- It's a story for gamers of all ages, hence the softer, more whimsical edge.

△○×□ The story is typical RPG fare; someone goes to save a thing, drama ensues. In this case, it's the sun, the moon and the stars that have gone missing.

HP 10/10
MP 10/10
1

HP 8/8
MP 15/15
3

WAIT
CAST

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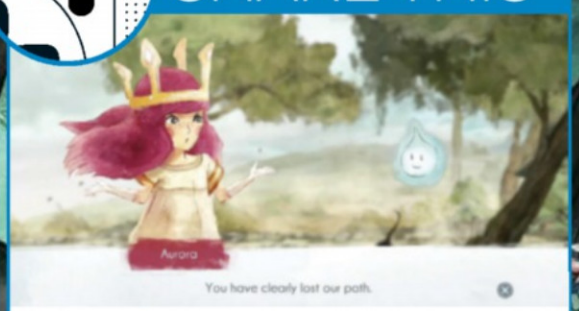

IT'S SO DAMN PRETTY

Sure, we love guns, but look at it

Any of the moments we've seen so far look like they could be individually painted artworks. The UbiArt Framework engine, combined with a relatively small team pumped up with creativity and passion for the project, has been put to excellent use here. While the game doesn't seem particularly challenging, it's as nice to watch as it is to play. We can see ourselves getting rather addicted to it, if only as a salve to *Dark Souls II*.

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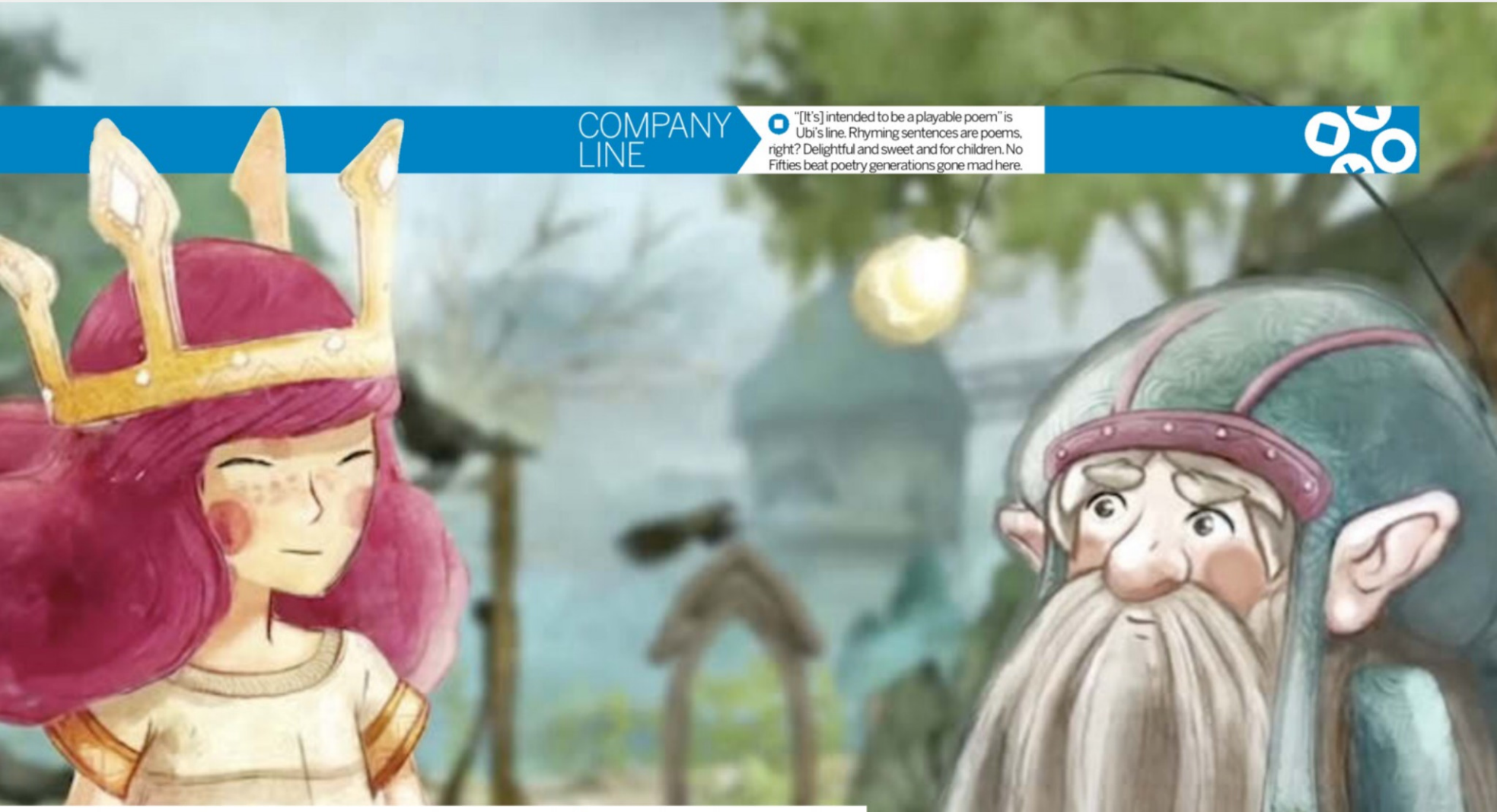

COMPANY LINE

"[It's] intended to be a playable poem" is Ubi's line. Rhyming sentences are poems, right? Delightful and sweet and for children. No Fifties beat poetry generations gone mad here.

ETA 30 APRIL | **DEV** UBISOFT MONTREAL | **PUB** UBISOFT | **TWITTER** @CHILDOFLIGHTUBI

Child Of Light

Art and soul

PS4

ALSO COMING TO PS3

SO THERE ARE probably going to be two kinds of people reading this preview. The first kind looks at the beautiful images and says, "Well, this looks freaking delightful. I must find out more..." The second kind says, "Lame. Look at all that twinkly shit. I must find out more, in order to rip it to shreds." You guys in the first group? It *is* looking freaking delightful, you're absolutely right. Now go about your day. You lot in the second group? You need to listen to us for a bit.

Instead of discussing how lovely this RPG-platformer is looking and how Rayman's UbiArt Framework engine is powering this watercolour art nouveau eye feast, which admittedly would be pretty easy to do, we're way more interested in how it actually plays. *Ni No Kuni* was gorgeous, but what really won us over was the battle system and development of the little warrior dudes who would bravely fight on your behalf. *Okami* could be stunning, but if it hadn't had that inventive ink palette stuff and deep mythology running through it, we doubt we'd have paid it as much attention. Beauty in videogames, when it's only pixel deep, is not enough to warrant high praise unless it's got something else going on that draws us in.

Thankfully, *Child Of Light* is looking like it's got exactly that. With a combat system straight out of PlayStation's *Grandia* (just 2D instead of 3D) and RPG levelling, this isn't just a 2D platformer, despite how it looks. Combat is all about timing your moves with your opponent's, and choosing the right kind of attack/support. It's turn-based combat, then, but if your enemy is faster than you, they'll get their turns quicker. And if they attack while you're in the brief Casting stage, that's your move cancelled. So far, so old-school, but old-school RPG combat is *good*.

What's more intriguing is the addition of skill trees, not to mention crafting. Maybe we've been playing too much *Final Fantasy XIV: A Realm Reborn*, but we're so into crafting right now. You'll be able to play with Oculi power-ups, combining them into more powerful kinds of abilities for the characters. We can't say exactly what this means right now, but it definitely means crafting, and we heart crafting.

There are also some cute little additions to the game that the shiny happy first group is definitely going to love, like the ability to leave little notes in light on the walls for your friends. While they're supposed to say things like "Treasure –>", that's just asking for us to point to bosses as treasure. Or a trap as treasure. Or basically anything that definitely isn't treasure as treasure. This *Dark Souls Jr.* addition for younger gamers and their friends has the potential to be something hilarious for the rest of us. All in all, *Child Of Light* is looking deceptively intriguing.

And now, because you second group people are maybe on board with the idea of this game now and we like nothing more than throwing curveballs, we're going to tell you how apprehensive we are of *Child Of Light*. Platforming, RPG elements, quests, crafting: yes. But that little shiny guy, Igniculus... He worries us. He's there to assist – find secret stuff, heal you in battles, blind enemies so you can sneak past them – but he looks rather too familiar. Yeah, Murfy, we're talking about you, you little green buttface.

If Igniculus has a proper AI brain or if we can actually control him properly as it looks like we can, then everything will be fine, but if not, it could be the element that lets down the whole title. From what we've seen so far, it does look like Igniculus can be controlled at will by the player, so maybe we're just still sore from *Rayman Legends* making sure there's something for Wii U players to actually do. If that happens again, we'll still be in that first group, cooing at how lovely it is, but if Igniculus is just Murfy in disguise then Ubisoft might have a difficult job convincing us to not get into the second group the next time around.

Rebecca Richards

Looking stunning on the UbiArt engine, **CHILD OF LIGHT** is being developed by Ubisoft Montreal. Check out the dev blog at **childoflightgame.tumblr.com**

HASHTAG DRIVECLUB

Whenever you discuss *Driveclub*, don't forget to include that ludicrous hashtag that Sony insists on using for the game's logo. We get that it's to reflect the social, connected nature of the game but even so, it can't help but feel desperate all the same, likely the product of a marketing meeting rather than a focus group of actual gamers. Sigh.

ALWAYS ONLINE

The whole world and its dog kicked off when Microsoft announced that Xbox One was supposed to be an always-online console, but the truth is that's the way games are going. Without an online connection, *Driveclub* will be just another racing game – the main hook of the game is team racing and competing with others.

Instant Expert

ETA Q2 2014 | **DEV** EVOLUTION STUDIOS | **PUB** SONY | **TWITTER** @DRIVECLUB

Driveclub PS4

COMING SOON

Sony clearly left its launch window more open than the actual window of a cartoon pie-baker, since *Driveclub* is now a good four months late. Still, the improvement in the three months between E3 and Gamescom last year was amazing, so hopefully the team will have tightened the bolts in more than twice that time frame.

DRIFT KING

The coolest things about *Driveclub* are the incidental challenges it throws up, suggesting mid-race that your inept friends might be better at the game than you and asking you to prove otherwise. Nail a drift, destroy a maximum speed... all facets of your racing skill set will be tested in an evolved form of *Need For Speed*'s Autolog that purely tracks skill-based stats.

A FREE RIDE

While it was announced as the first PS4 PS Plus game, delays meant that *Contrast*, *Don't Starve* and other titles have had to fill in for *Driveclub* while it gets its face on backstage. It's still going to have a free PS Plus version when it finally arrives though, with a Platinum and everything – you'll just get far more content from the paid version.

WILL THE DELAY HURT DRIVECLUB?

Usually, we'd be happy to just say yes and leave the rest of this sidebar blank, but we're not honestly sure that the delay *will* have a negative impact on *Driveclub* in the long run. Competition is, after all, pretty sparse – some might say there isn't even a true competitor on PS4 at all.

No, *Need For Speed* scratches a different itch to *Driveclub* and its more realistic peers. But again, there's no sign of any of those interfering – it'll probably be years before *Gran Turismo* comes to PS4 and arcade racers aren't really aimed at the same market.

It's a real shame that *Driveclub* missed out on the PS4 launch, as it's perhaps the game that best fits the Share button mentality of every announced PS4 game so far. Beaten a mate's time? Share that. Nailed a drift? To the Share button!

Driveclub still stands to be the first 'proper' racer on PS4, despite the fact that it's going to rock up fashionably late. The free PS Plus version can't hurt, either – those who like it will pay for more, as evidenced by every free-to-play game ever. Unless somebody sneaks in with a rival title from off the radar and manages to ship in a couple of months, Sony has very little to worry about.

Verdict: [verdict delayed]

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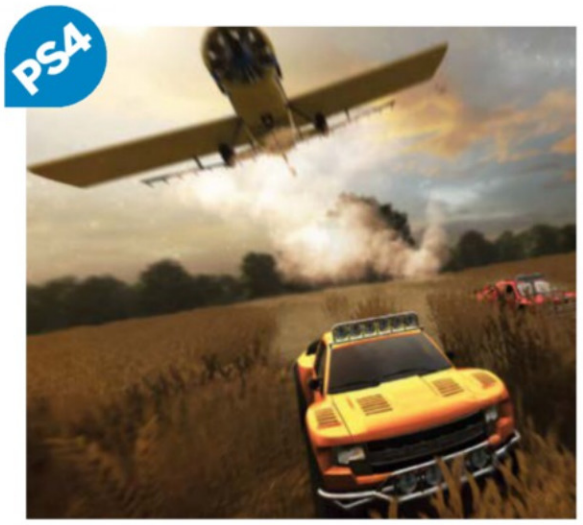
PREVIEW ROUND-UP

Some games came out ages ago, others are about to be released and some are miles off. Here, you'll find a selection of games from the latter two categories, but which will be next to join your collection?



THE CREW

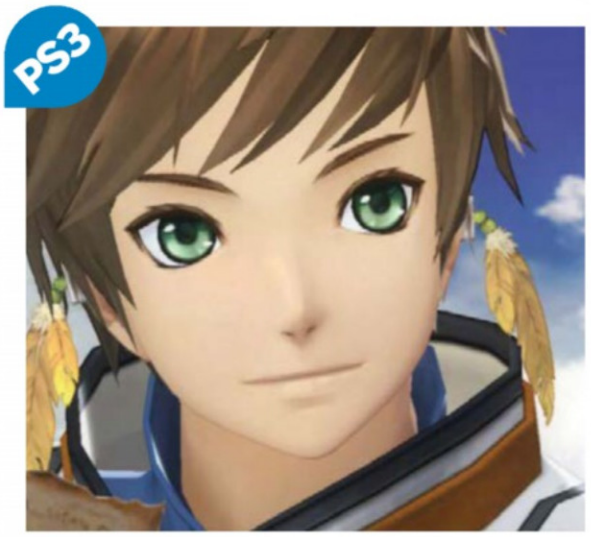
A FEW RACING games have experimented with more persistent worlds – such as last year's *Need For Speed Rivals* – but *The Crew* seems to be taking it to a whole new level. Set in a huge, open recreation of the US (not a geographically accurate one), Ubisoft is claiming it will take 90 minutes to drive coast to coast. Players can form crews to race against rivals and RPG elements will have you upgrading skills. This could turn out to be the open-world racer that defines what the genre can do on PlayStation 4.

RELEASE DATE: Q4 2014

SNIPER ELITE 3

SNIPER ELITE MIGHT be best known for the incredibly gory slow motion kill-cams when a bullet finds its target, but *V2* was a fun, albeit flawed, take on a more specific aspect of WW2. The series is back, and this time the action has moved to the African front, and with a promise of more realistic AI, thankfully. Otherwise, business as usual seems to be the story here. Players control an Allied Forces sniper, operating solo and taking out Nazi forces from afar while trying to remain undetected. And yes, don't worry; the kill-cams are back and even more gruesome than ever.

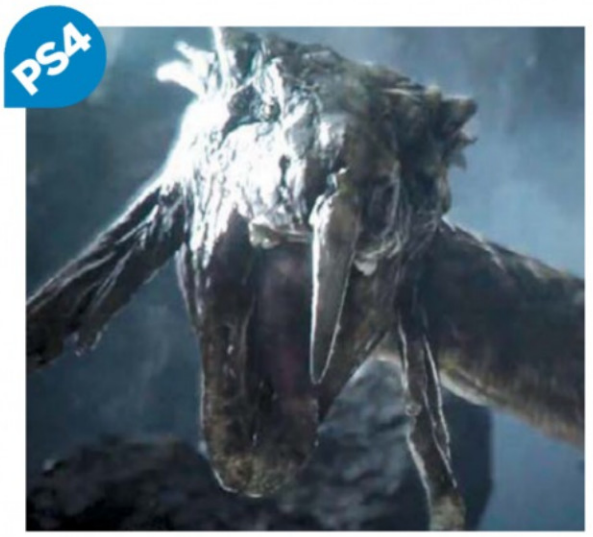
RELEASE DATE: TBC



TALES OF ZESTIRIA

THE NEXT MAINLINE title in the *Tales Of* JRPG series, *Tales Of Zestiria* will likely come to Japan first, but it's the first in the franchise that the developers know will be making the journey West as they are making it. The story will be more of a pure fantasy tale than games prior, focusing on the adventures of kind-hearted warrior Slay and tomboyish warrior princess Alicia. Expect anime visuals, button-bashing fights and lots of cut-scenes about philosophy, growing up and saving the world. Obviously.

RELEASE DATE: TBC



DEEP DOWN

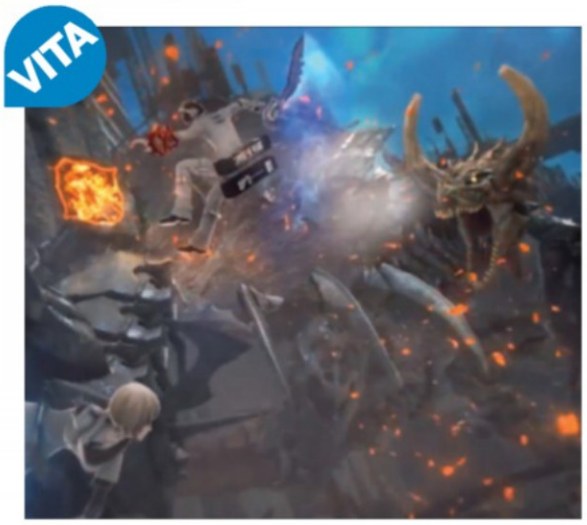
DARK SOULS II HAS rekindled our love for all things dark fantasy, and here comes Capcom to cash in on the craze. *Deep Down* will be a free-to-play dungeon crawler that, from what we've seen, bears more than a passing resemblance to *Dark Souls*. Set in a near-future New York, it has players exploring dungeons based on the 'memories' of collected artefacts (how very *Assassin's Creed*), but *Deep Down* still looks great, even if it is borrowing some gameplay elements and ideas.

RELEASE DATE: TBC

EA SPORTS UFC

UFC OWNER DANA White may have once said he would never work with EA, but lo and behold – THQ no longer exists and EA has the UFC licence. Say what you will about EA, but it pumps serious money into its sports games, and the *Fight Night* boxing series is one of our favourites. We love any sport where people punch each other in the face here on **Play**, so it's going to be exciting to see how the game will differentiate from the *UFC Undisputed* series. EA's last MMA effort was pretty good, after all.

RELEASE DATE: SPRING 2014



FREEDOM WARS

MONSTER HUNTER IS a big deal in Japan, but the Vita is yet to have a proper entry in the series reach the platform. The solution? Clones! We've already seen stuff like *Soul Sacrifice* and *Toukiden*, both very good games but with extremely obvious influences. *Freedom Wars* is Sony's own take on the burgeoning new genre, set in a far future where criminals are sentenced to live in huge, monster-infested prisons. Killing these monsters reduces your sentence, and voila – we have a premise.

RELEASE DATE: Q4 2014

ALIEN ISOLATION

THE ALIEN GAME we've always wanted. The Creative Assembly is coming at the franchise from a new angle: horror, rather than action. Why it's taken the guys behind the licence so long to realise that this is what people want from this franchise we don't know, but at least we made it eventually. A first-person adventure with a single, enormous alien on your tail and no way to defend yourself aside from running away sounds like a great idea to us, and we can't wait to see if TCA can do the concept justice.

RELEASE DATE: Q4 2014

ULTRA STREET FIGHTER IV

ONE OF THESE days we'll find out who the fifth new character in *Ultra Street Fighter IV* is, and it'll probably be a disappointment after the amount of hype Ono and crew have put into it. Still, the latest wave of hints from around the web mention dolls and monkeys, seeming to suggest that it might be Vietnamese Shadaloo doll Santamu, who meets all criteria laid out by Ono so far. And if she fights alongside her pet monkey, then we just found our new main.

RELEASE DATE: JUNE 2014

STAR WARS BATTLEFRONT

PEOPLE FOR YEARS wondered how good a *Star Wars Battlefront* game made by DICE (the guys that make *Battlefield*) would be, but for so long it seemed just a dream. But when LucasArts died and the *Star Wars* licence went to EA, all of a sudden the dream was a reality. It's not coming until at least 2015, in all likelihood to tie in with the upcoming *Star Wars: Episode VII*, but *Star Wars Battlefront* made by DICE is coming, and it's going to be glorious. If you haven't played a *Battlefront* game, imagine *Battlefield* set in *Star Wars*. It sounds like it couldn't possibly be that simple, but it is, and it works great. The combination of game and developer is something to get pretty freaking happy about, especially as it's going to be a re-launch of the franchise as a whole and not just a continuation of the series. Multiple character classes, drivable ground vehicles and spaceships, the odd chance to play as an über-powerful hero character... *Battlefront* is a good time. Can you tell we're excited? We can't wait.

RELEASE DATE: 2015

THE EVIL WITHIN

SHINJI MIKAMI IS back to re-stake his claim on the genre he created. Playing as Detective Sebastian Castellanos, you rush to the site of a gruesome mass murder with your colleagues, but you're attacked and lose consciousness. You wake up, and the world is not as you left it. Death and madness greet you, reality slipping away as nightmarish creatures stalk your every move... We're *so* ready for another tense thriller that's actually going to scare the crap out of us. Bring it on, Mikami.

RELEASE DATE: 29 AUGUST

INSIDE NAUGHTY DOG

The Making Of The Last Of Us

FORMAT PLAYSTATION 3 | **RELEASE DATE** 14 JUNE 2013 | **DEVELOPER** NAUGHTY DOG
PUBLISHER SONY | **PLAY SCORE** 94/100 | **METACRITIC SCORE** 95/100

"With the production values available to us, we believed we could tell a character-driven story the likes of which people had never seen before." These are the words of Neil Druckmann, creative director of The Last Of Us, a game rightly seen by many as the single greatest achievement of the PS3 era

TRYING TO SUCCINCTLY explain just what it is that makes *The Last Of Us* such a significant accomplishment is no easy task, such is the diversity and strength of impact it has had on players and the videogame industry as a whole. For the most part, triple-A game development pre-*The Last Of Us* meant a concentration on guns, overblown action sequences and a general ambition to recreate the summer blockbuster experience.

Developer Naughty Dog has taken this approach itself, typified it even, with *Uncharted* – a series so polished in terms of design and execution that to compare it directly to its genre peers can seem churlish. For all intents and purposes, Naughty Dog had conquered the blockbuster.

"If Uncharted is a summer blockbuster, then *The Last Of Us* is more akin to an indie film," explains Druckmann, who also served as writer and designer on *Uncharted 2: Among Thieves*. "Going from *Uncharted* to *The Last Of Us*, I think we did a pretty good job of ignoring the desire to go even bigger in terms of spectacle... we could easily have stuck to what we've been successful with in the past, but you need to be careful how much you let past success guide future decisions.

"We try to let our passion for what we want to play be our guide, because what you most want to play is probably something that you've never played

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△○×□ Naughty Dog's art team is one of the best around, turning bleakness into beauty.

before. I think that approach helps you create unique experiences."

What Druckmann, alongside other key members of Naughty Dog such as *The Last Of Us* game director Bruce Straley, wanted to play was something altogether slower-paced – something capable of taking advantage of a videogame's longer running time to tell a deeper story based around character bonding and growth.

"The deepest love between humans is the love between a parent and a child," Druckmann states when asked about the origins of *The Last Of Us*'s Joel and Ellie. "But it became more interesting to us to imagine two characters who are not related but still manage to build a bond so strong that it still felt like a parent loving a child. By doing that, we can put the player on a journey of loving this other character at the same time the protagonist is, so the player and the protagonist are going through the same emotions. That idea eventually became Joel and Ellie."

The relationship between Joel and Ellie is at the core of everything *The Last Of Us* does and attempts to do. This is not a game simply about trying to kill the bad guys, save the planet or hunt the treasure; this is a game about survival in the harshest of circumstances and how that can change people. As a result, a lighter touch to writing and design was required.

"*The Last Of Us*'s main moments are not fast-paced things like collapsing buildings or trains being blown up. They're more subtle and nuanced," says Druckmann, in reference to the *Uncharted* games he has worked on. "We took the approach that each set piece had to tell you something about the characters, so we had to

"THE LAST OF US IS MORE AKIN TO AN INDIE FILM"

△○×□ There's more than a little *Half-Life 2* to some of the game's early concept art...

BLUFFER'S GUIDE

What makes The Last Of Us great?

1 A story of character growth and relationships that is without a peer in the triple-A space.

2 Expert pacing that results in poignant, harrowing lows, as well as touching, uplifting highs.

3 Combat that doesn't funnel you into certain ways of playing and rewards you for adapting.

4 High production values result in one of the most visually striking games of the generation.

5 A fresh take on the apocalypse, proof that there are different ways to approach familiar scenarios.

make intimate scenarios that were largely smaller in scale than what we've done in other games."

Anyone that has played *The Last Of Us* will remember the 'giraffe' scene, a set piece so atypical of triple-A game design that its impact is simultaneously understated and shocking. Having been travelling through the harsh and unrelenting environment of a world ravaged by the outbreak of a zombie-like infection, the sight of a giraffe – an elegant, powerful and gentle image of nature – serves to remind you that hope can still exist in even the most challenging of situations.

It's no accident that it's at this point in the narrative that Joel and Ellie are finally warming to each other, their relationship moving past the point of suspicion and bitterness at having been thrown together without each other's blessing. While it doesn't say it explicitly, the giraffe represents this calming of waters between the two – a set piece aimed at promoting reflection upon the pair's emotional journey so far.

"There was always a worry that going down this route would mean that the game wouldn't be as big, that we'd become too niche," says Druckmann.

△○×□ One of *The Last Of Us*'s best features is that it never pulls punches.

△○×□ Actors Troy Baker (Joel) and Ashley Johnson (Ellie) performing in the motion capture studio.

STANDOUT MOMENT

△○×□ The opening to the game is as unexpected as it is heartbreaking.

The Last Of Us's opening sequence, which introduces us to Joel as well as the wider scenario in which he finds himself involved, ranks amongst the best in videogame history – equal to that of *Half-Life* and *BioShock*.

By switching between who the player controls, Naughty Dog manages to heighten the sense of terror consuming the situation as well as have us care more deeply about the characters. It's an example of how to tell an interactive story without resorting to the kind of passive techniques most games employ during their opening acts.

"But, again, we were trying to make things that we thought we'd like to play in a game, and if we didn't aim to do that then we'd be constantly second-guessing ourselves.

"We thought people would appreciate what we were trying to do but we didn't think it would be as popular or sell as much as something like *Uncharted*. Luckily we were proven wrong and it turned out that people did really enjoy the same things that we wanted to play."

While the goal was to provide a different kind of triple-A experience, the basic scenario of *The Last Of Us* is hardly fresh. Novels and movies, not to mention games, have long explored the idea of a society struggling in the face of some apocalypse or another. Furthermore, while Joel and Ellie might refer to them as 'Infected', the zombie route is hardly experimental, either...

"Obviously we knew that there were a lot of post-apocalyptic games out there when we were developing *The Last Of Us*," Druckmann explains in response.

"We really challenged ourselves to highlight what made our game different and whether we should even do a game within this genre.

"However, we're fans of the genre being explored in games, because I think the tension it can provide is pretty unique. The genre allows us to explore the depths of primal instinct that we might devolve to when all rules are gone and people feel lost. Within that, though, we wanted to explore the contrast between the horrible things that human beings are capable of and the themes of love and loyalty. I think that's something untapped in videogames, at least in triple-A videogames."

The challenge that videogames have in exploring such themes is that, unlike novels or movies, interactivity must play a part somewhere – the player needs to have things to do, things that make them feel like part of the experience and not just a passenger along for the ride.

"Making sure we had a story that did actually afford us enough interactivity and enough mechanics to satisfy the player

ORIGINS OF AN APOCALYPSE

Neil Druckmann recalls the initial idea that grew into The Last Of Us…

"*The Last Of Us* game director, Bruce Straley, and myself would often have dinner at a place called Curry House when we were [working] to get *Uncharted 2* finished. We would talk about what we were trying to do with *Uncharted* and how to use interactivity to build a relationship between two characters.

"One of the brainstorms we had was having Nathan Drake embed himself in a warzone with a group of rebels, and one of those rebels would be a mute teenage girl. Really, the idea was inspired by *Ico* where everything is told through gestures.

"In one scene, we imagined that Drake is awoken by this girl and she motions for him to follow her. Eventually she takes you up to a rooftop and shows you the city, and you see the city through her eyes and, for the first time, you get a sense of how beautiful it actually is. We really liked the idea of her sharing this very personal moment with Drake and the player.

"That idea was so intriguing that, while we were still working on *Uncharted 2*, we would talk about how great it would be to base a whole game on that concept. As our games are long-form we could spend a long time building this kind of bond between two characters that initially don't know each other – maybe don't like each other – but end up loving each other so much that they're willing to make unfathomable sacrifices for one another. Really, *The Last Of Us*, especially Joel and Ellie, came out of that thinking."

"WHEN GAMEPLAY AND STORY WORK IN SYNTHESIS IS WHEN YOU CREATE GREAT THINGS"

was a major challenge in the early writing and development stages. Frankly, early drafts of the story didn't really fit with the kind of gameplay we wanted to create.

"Ellie's original story arc, for example, was that she wouldn't shoot or kill anybody until the very end of the game, but we felt that players would have become too frustrated with her if she's not engaging in combat much until the finale. Changing her arc to satisfy the interactivity influenced her character and resulted in her story changing from that original draft."

Getting that balance right between gameplay and narrative, and how the two influence and change one another, is no easy task, as Druckmann goes on to explain. "I try to not think about the story and gameplay at the same time because you tend to get paralysed as a writer. I think about the story in isolation, and then I'll work with the game director to see whether we can actually make that story playable. If the answer is 'no' then you have to change the story.

"Likewise, there will be gameplay ideas discussed in isolation of the story – because you don't want to constrain the gameplay, either. When gameplay and story work in synthesis is when you create great things and I think the bond between the characters in *The Last Of Us* is an example of that."

Part of *The Last Of Us*'s genius rests in the pacing of its story, how the characters move from moments of terrifying excitement to considered calm. It's this pacing, perhaps more than any other single element, that allows the characters space and time to communicate their personal stories in a way most other post-apocalyptic games do not allow.

"If you have nothing but action then you limit yourself to only being able to tell certain kinds of stories," Druckmann comments, in response to our query as to why so many triple-A games follow similar narrative patterns. "Deviating away from an action focus naturally puts you on a path whereby you can tell other kinds of stories. For us, we certainly believe you don't have to be an action game anymore to succeed in the triple-A space, and I hope other studios feel the same way.

"I think you can see an evolution from *Uncharted* to *The Last Of Us*, and then on to *Left Behind*, which relied even less on action. Going forward we'll explore other mechanics that help us tell stories."

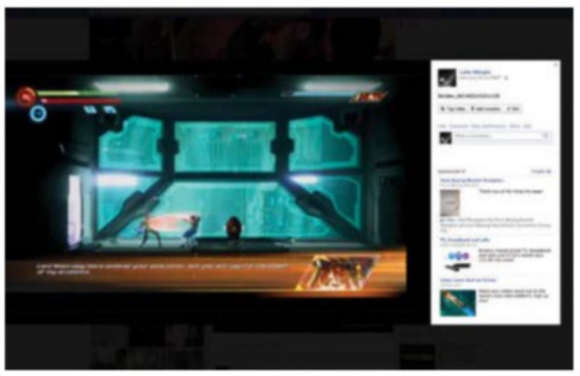
With that in mind, perhaps the most interesting thing about *The Last Of Us* is actually how it's going to influence the future projects of not only one of the world's most talented game developers, but the gaming community as a whole.

John Robertson

△○✕□ How much influence will *The Last Of Us* have on the next *Uncharted* game?

HOW TO SHARE YOUR PS4 VIDEOS ON YouTube

Recording and sharing video from the PS4 is one of the best new features of the console, but the ability to only export video to Facebook is a tad annoying – who uses Facebook video anyway? All the cool kids are on YouTube, and luckily, getting those vids off Facebook and onto YouTube is easy as pie. Take a look at our simple five-step guide to get you started, and don't worry – Sony is well aware that this is a hardware feature gamers want to see, and has stated that it'll be added in a future system update. In the meantime, though, you might want to get used to doing it this way...



1 Upload your video from your PS4 to Facebook. Simples. This is done by hitting the Share button at any point during gameplay and choosing to edit and upload your vid to your linked Facebook account. It's all well explained as you do it, so you don't need us to tell you how.

2 Once the upload is complete, find your video on Facebook. If you don't want everyone to see it at this stage, make sure you've changed your settings on the PS4 to upload the videos privately – this way they will only show up on your profile to you and don't clutter up everyone else's feeds.

Copy the URL from the address bar of your video, or grab it by hitting the Get Link button on your video's page on Facebook. Be sure to set the video to HD before you do – you don't want to be uploading the low resolution version, after all.

Head over to downvids.net and paste your URL into the text box. Make sure to select the Download High Quality option to ensure you get the best looking video. Hit the Download button and save the video to your computer.

Upload your new video to YouTube! It's as simple as that. If you haven't done this before, first make a YouTube account. Then, it's as easy as hitting the Upload button on the front page and following the steps – if we can do it, so can you. If you feel like adding some commentary or text to your video beforehand, a free and simple video editor should do the trick, or you can make simple edits on PS4 before you export.

OTHER OPTIONS

There are a bunch of other websites you can use to grab the video from Facebook, if Downvids isn't working for you. One of our in-house favourites is fbdown.net, but a quick web search will give you plenty of alternative options.

Most browsers aside from Internet Explorer (please, never use Internet Explorer) will also have add-ons that add video downloading functionality into the browser itself. We've found examples easily on Chrome and Firefox, and other open-source browsers should have several to choose from. Check your ripped video before you host it on YouTube, though – we've had a few instances of corruption, fixed simply by re-downloading.

FREE EDITING SOFTWARE

You might want to stick some captions or commentary on your video, or cut it a bit for length. But worry not – you don't need to splash out the big bucks for a professional program. There are plenty of perfectly usable free editing programs out there and they might not have the functionality of a paid program, but they will get the job done. Windows Movie Maker is very simple to use, as are Free Video Dub and VirtualDub. If you want the full shebang, give Lightworks a try. This is a program with so many features that it's crazy to think that it's being given away for free. Show the world just how creative you can be!

THE TEN FUNNIEST GAMES ON PS3

SOUTH PARK: THE STICK OF TRUTH HAS FINALLY ARRIVED, BRANDISHING FLAMING TENNIS BALLS AND LUMPS OF POOP, AND IT'S HANDS DOWN ONE OF THE MOST LAUGH-OUT-LOUD GAMES EVER. IT'S RARE THAT GAMES MANAGE TO STRIKE THAT DELICATE BALANCE BETWEEN COMEDY AND GAMEPLAY, BUT THIS LOT MANAGED IT. IF YOU FANCY A GIGGLE AND HAVEN'T PLAYED THESE, WE HEARTILY RECOMMEND DOING SO

SAINTS ROW: THE THIRD

ONE OF THE rather more nonsense games featured here, *Saints Row: The Third* was almost exclusively about the pursuit of the ridiculous, both through taking the piss out of other games and by creating its own bizarre world. Taking its established style and whacking up the crazy to the nth degree, *Saints Row: The Third* decided it was done playing by normal people levels of fun and set about making you feel like the badassiest badass ever. There isn't another game we can think of that genuinely maintains this kind of oneupmanship of itself while still being actually funny.

MONKEY ISLAND

AN ABSOLUTE CLASSIC, *Monkey Island* came to PS3 in the *Special Edition Collection*, and we're still loving it today. The delightfully dapper yet frequently dumb Guybrush Threepwood is probably the main reason for that, the 'mighty pirate' progressing from a simple, lucky guy to a neurotic but witty protagonist. Bending the rules of videogame immersion, *Monkey Island*'s characters frequently break rank and talk to you directly, not to mention the fact that this 18th Century-set game frequently throws neon lights and robots and such at you.

GRAND THEFT AUTO V

SURE, IT'S ABOUT the absurd descent of society, with a healthy dose of exploring what it means to be male and masculine in today's world, but *GTA V* still gets us with Trevor. Don't get us wrong, we love the TV shows and the radio stations, but our hearts and belly laughs belong to Trevor. "Let's see... what Trevor's doing!" became something of a catchphrase here at **Play**, as we swooped away from Michael's messy family life (yawn) or Franklin's journey into crime (double-yawn) to find Trevor slumped in a parking lot, passed out and wearing a dress.

BORDERLANDS 2

WITH SOME OF the best writing we've ever encountered, *Borderlands 2* is the full package of funny. From satirising existing characters to dissecting RPG board games, this is an FPS with a shitload of care that's gone into making every little detail of the world engaging. It's not without a good measure of parody, but the strongest aspect of *Borderlands 2* is undoubtedly its characters – Handsome Jack and Tiny Tina being two of our favourites (if you ever have a horse, you know to call it Butt Stallion) – injected with a real vibrancy that is rare to find in any medium.

LOLLIPOP CHAINSAW

IF YOU WERE one of the million or so people that actually played this, we'd forgive you for not picking up on the sharp dialogue between Juliet and her bodyless boyfriend Nick; there's a Trophy for looking up her skirt, for crying out loud. Via this unique perspective, their relationship satirises a lot of the issues found in the realistic representation of videogame characters, but if that's a bit too much for you, then it's got an 18-year-old cheerleader brutally maiming hordes of zombies with sparkles and rainbows to go along with the buckets of blood and gore.

DISGAEA

PROBABLY THE CUTEST game on the list, *Disgaea* is a deceptively complex tactical-RPG with a lot of random humour thrown in for good measure. From the stupid things you can collect, to the stupid things you can wear and the stupid things you can fight, it's not a light touch with the comedy, but it is laugh-out-loud funny. Being a Space Pirate wearing a plastic nose and throwing your companions around just doesn't get old. Plus Prinnies. If you're not aware, they're the little blue penguiny guys with teeny wings tottering around on peg legs, who explode when thrown.

DEADLY PREMONITION

IT'S A TRICKY one, this. We're still not sure if it counts as 'funny', because it's just so damn weird. The game is hilarious at points, but mostly because it's so stilted and strange. The characters are often flat stereotypes, using broad, awkward and inappropriate gestures while they speak, and the main character of Agent York himself is anti-social to the point of definitely being fired if this were anything like real life. Elements of the game where you drive for what seems like days to explore a crime scene then drive all the way back to town are infuriating, but have a certain ridiculous charm.

FAR CRY 3: BLOOD DRAGON

SOMETIMES YOU WANT subtlety, nuance, a piquant aroma of dry wit and delicate subversion. This game is not that. This game is a wild and joyful embrace of everything that made the Eighties wonderful/terrible/exhausting. In a world of neon pink and lightning blue, you, Mark IV Cyber Commando Sergeant Rex Power Colt, must save the world from a cyborg army in the dark, far-off future of 2007. You'll go about this saving the world thing mostly by trying to explode it. If that doesn't sound awesome to you, then we don't understand this world any more.

OCTODAD

YOU LOVE OCTODAD. You might not know it yet, if you've yet to experience the haphazard brilliance of being a humble octopus trying to pass as a human, but you do. It's just a brilliant idea; everyone is terrible at being an octopus-man-thing, including you. It's slapstick, sure, but trying to control your many squishy limbs more often than not results in panicking around a room, knocking over vases and lamps and everything. We love Octodad too. Enough, in fact, that we were willing to offer him a place on this list despite never appearing in a PS3 game. He deserves it.

PORTAL

WHILE THERE'S A case to be made for *Portal 2* being on this list instead, we love the fact that the joke in *Portal* is you. You're trapped, helpless, forced to go through these pointless, life-threatening puzzles and slowly but surely GLaDOS will make it quite clear to you that you're one of many. Add in the darker comedic elements like having to destroy your Companion Cube and you've got a brilliant mix of excellently-timed comedic moments. And Jonathan Coulton's song is a perfectly psychotic cherry on a twisted little cake (that probably doesn't exist).

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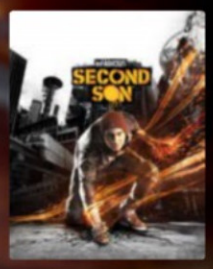
inFamous: Second Son

Conquering morality with superpowers



DETAILS

PUBLISHER
Sony

DEVELOPER
Sucker Punch

PRICE
£54.99

PLAYERS
1

AGE RATING
16+

INSTALL SIZE
24 GB

TWITTER
@SuckerPunchProd

Trophies 48

1 2 11 34

PS4

AS THE FIRST major PS4 exclusive since the console's launch line-up hit shelves a little over four months ago, there's no getting away from the fact that there's enormous pressure on developer Sucker Punch to impress with *inFamous: Second Son*. A console is only as good as its games, and exclusive games are the best benchmark of all, their very exclusivity going a long way to determine a specific platform's value in relation to the competition.

Thankfully, then, for Sucker Punch, Sony and, most importantly, for PS4 owners, *Second Son* does not disappoint. In fact, once you've gotten past the fact that protagonist Delsin Rowe is universally underwhelming as a personality, it reveals itself to be a great asset for a console that is still very much in its infancy. Ultimately, the degree to which you will enjoy *Second Son* is wholly dependent on how willing you are to look past its flimsy plot and characters and instead concentrate on its provision of legitimately slick, action-heavy gameplay within a visually stunning urban open-world.

The core narrative revolves around themes of suspicion, corruption, politics, control and fear – even going so far as to question what it means to be human in a world where evolution is sending the species down two distinct paths. On the one path you have the 'regular' humans, types like you and us that spend their days worrying about rent, debt and calories. On the other are Conduits, mutants that posses super-powers and spend their time worrying about whether or not they should reveal their abilities to a human population that predominantly sees them as both a threat and an abomination.

Delsin is new to the super-powered side of life, unwittingly realising his innate talent to absorb other Conduit's powers during the game's extended introduction. Following an event that kicks off a plot fuelled principally by a desire for personal justice and revenge, it's up to you, as Delsin, to decide how to use your new powers.

Do you do the responsible thing and become a force for positive change and try to bring Conduits and humans together? Or do you become a walking advert for the idea that 'power corrupts' and promote, through violence and intimidation, the belief that Conduits are superior to humans and should therefore not be held back by their genetically-challenged cousins?

Your moral choices are ranked and displayed via a Karma system that takes note of major decisions you make as the narrative unfolds, as well as minor actions you take as you explore and interact with the game's digital recreation of Seattle. Corrupting fellow Conduits and bringing them around to a life of inflicting destruction and pain, for example, results in major swings towards the 'Bad' side of your Karmic barometer, while encouraging them to

prove to humans that their supernatural powers can be used to subdue rampant criminal activity is considered a morally 'Good' act.

At certain key points you're explicitly asked to choose between undertaking a 'Good' or a 'Bad' mission, the disregarded option being removed from the game completely and resulting in a fairly significant change in the direction of the Delsin's story arc – including which of two possible endings you get to see. Frankly, quite possibly because of the lack of charisma he possesses right from the start, the morally questionable options result in a better experience (both in terms of narrative and gameplay) and removes any effort required to try and force yourself to actually like this person you're playing as.

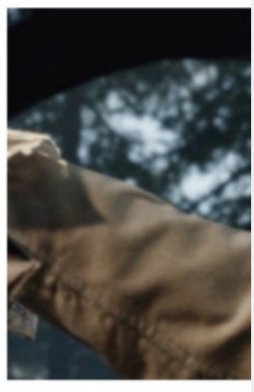
For every enemy or civilian you kill you're given negative Karma points, sending you further and quicker towards the dark side. It's possible to 'subdue' enemies by essentially tying them up and leaving them in the open for their comrades to rescue them later, but doing so can be more fiddly and liable to get you killed in the process. Combat sequences can feature so many enemies, attacking from so many different angles, that not accidentally killing foes becomes an incredibly challenging act. Naturally, then, most players will build up the Bad side of the Karma meter. Therefore, if you are intent on being a 'Good' Delsin, you're forced into a slower, more considered pace of play that doesn't altogether fit with the monstrous powers at your disposal.

There are a number of these abilities to unlock and master, but it's Smoke and Neon that you become most familiar with given that they're the first you unlock. While difficult in their applications, both Smoke and Neon are at their most devastating and enjoyable when you throw caution to the wind and throw yourself into the middle of an enemy group – making it difficult to motivate yourself to adhere to the 'Good' moral path by showing mercy.

Smoke provides you with the power of flames, manifesting itself in the form of grenades that can be conjured out of thin air, a fire-tipped chain-link whip and a powerful rocket – the latter hit with strict ammo limitations that prevents you from relying on it too much. Neon, while it does provide melee options, is more helpfully thought of as a gun – with Delsin able to shoot bolts of pink/purple lightning from his fists. While it might sound as though Neon is more suited to ranged combat, it's as viable in tight spaces as Smoke when combined with expert use of your traversal capabilities.

You see, Delsin's powers are not solely about combat – they're equally important as a means for navigating the environment and staying one step ahead of opponents. Neon, for example, lets you transform your entire body into a ball of energy and travel at high speed through people, over obstacles and up the sides of buildings. Immediately, the value of such an ability is evident in that you can scale the game's tallest buildings in a matter of seconds. Its real value, however, comes during combat. Spend some time honing your skills and before long Delsin is zigzagging through enemies, stopping here and there to shoot and kill a few, before taking energy form again and popping up in a new place to unleash some more destruction. It's genuinely satisfying to have this level of power at

"DELSIN'S POWERS ARE EQUALLY AS IMPORTANT AS A MEANS FOR NAVIGATING THE ENVIRONMENT"



△○×□ Going for the Hero or Infamous titles actually offers surprisingly different gameplay.

△○×□ Some of Delsin's attacks are not only stunning to behold, but also reduce an enemy's chance of survival to zero.

your disposal when so few limitations are needlessly tacked on.

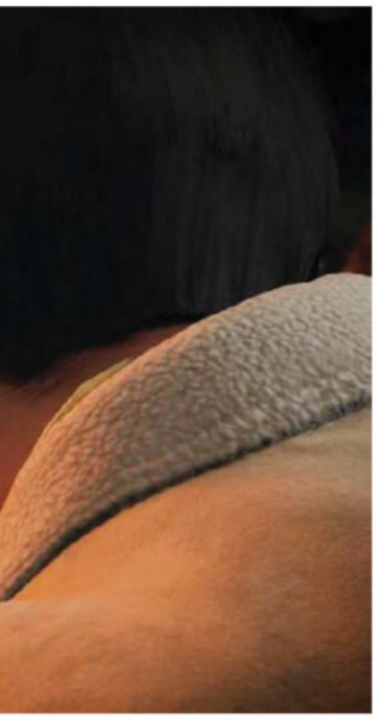
Smoke has similar traversal attributes, but they manifest themselves in different ways. You can literally turn yourself into a ball of smoke and slip straight through gates and fences that you'd otherwise lose time trying to jump/climb over; possibly getting yourself shot in the back of the head in the process. Further, vents at the bases of buildings can be 'smoked' into which results in you instantly appearing on the roof having exited through a handily-positioned grate or chimney stationed there.

With so few open-world games giving you a means of attack or movement over and above the other the usual sets of guns, swords and vehicles, it's an understatement to say that it's liberating to have such an extreme set of skills to deploy, experiment with and improve (via a robust upgrade tree). Furthermore, these are not the only powers available to you, but (disappointingly, perhaps) they are the only ones present for much of the game's running time and are the ones you will spend most time upgrading. Perhaps your best ability of all is one unlocked later in the game that grants temporary invisibility, but to explain its uses too deeply would ruin much of its appeal.

The unlucky individuals at the wrong end of your aggressions are chiefly the Department of Unified Protection (DUP), a militaristic group with a seemingly unlimited budget set up to identify, suppress and imprison any and all Conduits under the flimsy guise of protecting humanity. A contradictory organisation, DUP uses Conduit powers to achieve its goals and it's the group's leader, Augustine, who reveals herself to be arguably the most interesting of the game's characters.

DUP controls Seattle from bases it has set up in each of the city's districts, and it's within these walls that *Second Son*'s most consistently tough battles can be found. While they represent little in the way of threat when solo, groups of DUP can be remarkably tough to defeat – not just because of their high numbers, but because the diversity of troop type demands that you utilise a range of attack options within the same combat sequence. Regular foot soldiers keel over and die fairly easily, but having snipers, heavily-armoured goliaths and even those with the ability to teleport short distances means you must always stay mobile and intelligently choose the order in which you pick off targets in order to succeed.

Combat doesn't become especially difficult until you've unlocked the second of Seattle's two islands, at which point the number of high-level DUP soldiers increases dramatically. To make things easier, each of Delsin's abilities has a visually arresting special attack capable of clearing out entire



△○×□ The facial capture technology allows for a wide and believable range of expressions during cut-scenes.

△○×□ Some of the more cinematic moments could almost pass for real life, were it not for some odd faces.

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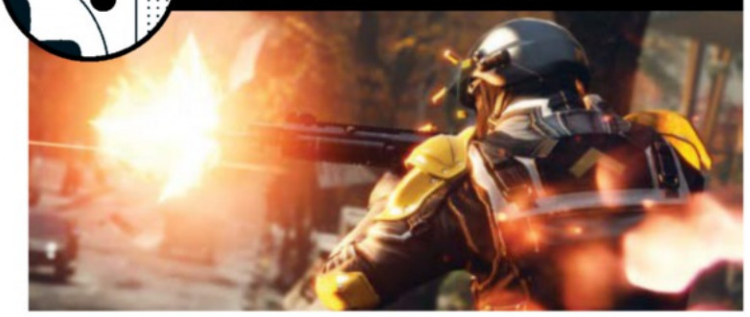


THE BATTLE FOR SEATTLE

Aside from a few select missions, taking Seattle back from the DUP is largely an optional exercise. Doing so, however, can certainly make your life easier. Liberated zones are not only safer due to reduced DUP numbers, but they can also be fast travelled between at your leisure.

The quickest way to drive the DUP out of a district is to complete a number of side missions in a given area, thereby reducing their control and setting up a final 'District Showdown' for control over the zone. Graffiti tagging specific locations, smoking out undercover agents, finding audio logs from a DUP insider, vandalising CCTV cameras and destroying the camps they've set-up throughout the city are all equally good ways of disrupting DUP influence.

Every zone asks you to perform the same kind of side missions, albeit in a slightly different way or to varying levels of difficulty. Catching an undercover agent, for example, is made more or less challenging depending on their speed and chosen route when they decide to run away from you, and some audio logs are well hidden. To an extent this prevents such tasks from becoming repetitive, but you'll want to hit that Share button before you've wiped The Man out of Seattle entirely...

IN THIS SERIES

INFAMOUS 2 A triumph of gameplay over narrative, *inFamous 2* made you feel like a superhero but failed to provide a worthy story.

△○×□ Sometimes, you need a break just to take in how ridiculously nice Seattle looks.

areas with a single strike, although earning the right to use it requires you to build up a 'Karmic Streak'. Depending on the situation this can be difficult to attain, forcing you to chain together enemy incapacitations in fairly quick succession – an act that puts you at greater risk of death given that retreating to allow your health to regenerate results in your chain resetting to zero.

It's difficult to overstate just how impressive these special attacks are, creating a visual spectacle that more than makes for up any difficulty experienced in unlocking them in the first place. That aesthetic quality is mirrored throughout *Second Son* as a whole, singling it out as a legitimate next-gen title and cementing it as the new benchmark against which PS4 graphical impact should be measured.

△○×□ You gain 'Good' or 'Bad' karma depending on which graffiti you choose, this chainsaw versus man in undies being an example of the latter.

"IT'S EMPOWERING TO HAVE THIS LEVEL OF POWER AT YOUR DISPOSAL WHEN SO FEW LIMITATIONS ARE TACKED ON"

△○×□ You're not quite as fast as The Flash, but Neon significantly increases the speed at which you can move through Seattle.

Seattle itself, which features a day/night cycle, alongside periods of heavy rain and blinding sunlight, is beautiful to behold. It's worth making your way to the to the top of the tallest buildings just to experience the seemingly never-ending draw distance combined with a diversity of environment that embeds different areas with a personality of their own. There are no complaints either regarding animation quality or frame rates, with even the most intense moments of combat occurring without even the slightest hint of a hiccup.

Where *Second Son* is likely to split its potential audience is in the tight focus of its gameplay. While there are various optional quests and tasks to embark upon, the vast majority of your time is spent either fighting or racing through

OR YOU COULD TRY △ **CASTLEVANIA: LORDS OF SHADOW 2** While not especially polished, it still has its charms by way of more open level design and quicker combat.

△○×□ Contrary to what is depicted here, Beckoning isn't one of Delsin's new super-powers.

PLAY CHALLENGE

△○×□ Neon powers play most like a third-person shooter. Show off your skills!

SHARE THESE FEATS, IF YOU CAN...

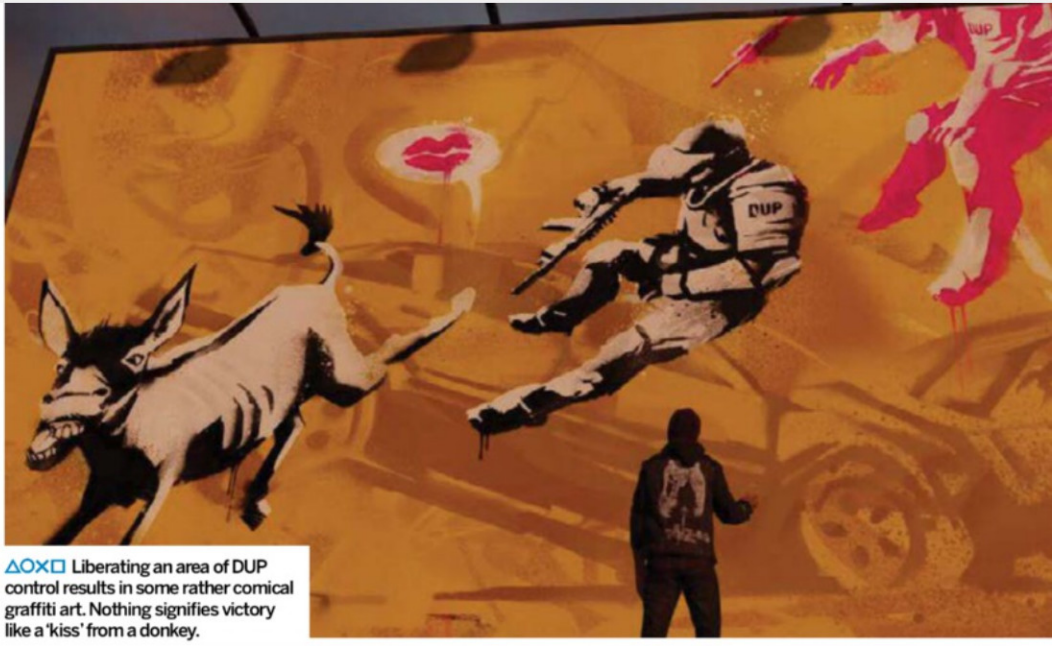
OFF WITH HIS HEAD

△ USING NEON, ACHIEVE ten headshots in a row and achieve a Karmic Streak in the process.

SMOKE SIGNAL

□ USING SMOKE, MOVE between three air vents without touching the ground or side of a building.

Beaten our trials? Let us know @PlayMag_UK!



△○×□ Liberating an area of DUP control results in some rather comical graffiti art. Nothing signifies victory like a 'kiss' from a donkey.

the world using the accelerated parkour Delsin's powers facilitate. Compared to a *Grand Theft Auto*, *Assassin's Creed* or *Saints Row*, there's little in the way of deviation from action, but the fact that Sucker Punch's approach remains engaging all the way to the credits speaks volumes about how entertaining the core mechanics are and how well they've been executed.

Until you've worked out how best to use all of the tools at your disposal, and come to some sort of decision regarding which ones you prefer and therefore gravitate towards, *Second Son* can feel a little one-dimensional. Once you've mastered the techniques and progressed to the point where combat is genuinely challenging, though, the true nature and variety of what's on offer becomes evident.

There's no doubt that room for improvement remains, though. Much was lauded in the build-up to release regarding destructible environments, but in reality only a tiny amount of the world can be impacted in such a way. The small-scale structures the DUP has constructed around the city in an attempt to keep order can mostly be destroyed completely, but none of the buildings that make up Seattle's core landscape can be so much as scratched. Being able to bring down an entire watchtower, but not being able to break even the flimsiest of glass shop fronts does mildly disrupt the believability of Sucker Punch's creation.

Then there are the narrative issues that begin with Delsin's bland and predictable personality, and end with his questionable undertaking of such a dangerous mission without much in the way of a legitimately believable motive. As it stands, *Second Son* is an impressive achievement, but to a large degree it's the protagonist that stands as the primary cause for the game not quite managing to attain 'essential' status. It's likely that Fetch, a fellow Seattle-based Conduit, would have made for a much more accomplished and intriguing lead character, not least because of her more interesting motivation for taking up the Conduit cause from the start.

Still, while Delsin might hamper the experience he doesn't come anywhere near to undermining it completely and, once things get into full swing, it's not difficult to overlook such faults and instead concentrate on the noteworthy positives. There's even an argument to be made for the fact that Delsin's insipid nature allows you to think more readily about his physical skills, which, after all, are *Second Son*'s most valuable asset.

Whatever the case, there's no denying that Sucker Punch has achieved a great success with *Second Son* and delivered a game that is not only worthy of its blockbuster-grade hype, but also the superior of its PS3-based franchise predecessors. By focusing on getting a smaller number of key elements right, *Second Son* delivers an experience that oozes quality of design and execution in most of the right places. Yes, the character and story could have done with some fleshing out, but that's less of a problem when playing as morally-questionable mutant is this much fun.

John Robertson

VERDICT

A focused experience that shines especially brightly during combat. The narrative side may not be as well thought-out but, thankfully, the gameplay is more than capable of taking centre stage.

86%

Metal Gear Solid V: Ground Zeroes

There's only room for one Snake... and one Big Boss...

DETAILS

PUBLISHER
Konami

DEVELOPER
Kojima Productions

PRICE
£29.99

PLAYERS
1

AGE RATING
18+

TWITTER
@HIDEO_KOJIMA_EN

Trophies 16

1 1 1 13

PS4
ALSO ON PS3

REVIEWING A GAME like *Ground Zeroes* is tough. Do we judge it entirely as an experience, ignore all exterior influences and focus solely on the game itself? Or do we view it as a product, an item that is being sold to consumers, looking at whether it offers value for money in what it delivers?

The huge issue surrounding *Ground Zeroes* and one that is impossible to avoid is that it is too expensive. This is the prologue to the 'proper' *Metal Gear Solid V, The Phantom Pain*. Imagine the Tanker section of *MGS2* and you know what to expect: a couple of hours that sets up the plot and introduces new gameplay mechanics. There is a ton of replay value in *Ground Zeroes* but yes; the main story will only take about two hours. Asking so much for such a game in an era where £5 indie titles can provide hundreds of hours of fun is simply too much.

So, as a product, *Ground Zeroes* has some problems. Luckily, as a game, it's nothing short of a triumph. People have a love for *Metal Gear Solid* unlike many other game franchises, mostly thanks to the tight stealth gameplay and completely mad story that springs from the mind of crazy genius Hideo Kojima. Fans will be glad to know that both elements of a great *Metal Gear* game are in abundance here.

The plot follows on almost immediately from *Peace Walker*. If you haven't played it, there's a story summary included, but seriously – play *Peace Walker*, it's great. Snake/Big Boss must infiltrate an American black site in Cuba to rescue comrade Chico as well as Cipher agent Paz, captured by her own organisation under (false) suspicion of being a double agent. That's all you've got for a setup, and it's all you need. Get in, find your allies and get out.

From the start we can see just how *Metal Gear Solid* has changed. Gone are the linear corridors and environments of past games, replaced with an open sandbox with multiple ways to approach and accomplish each objective.

The control scheme is similar to *Peace Walker*, but with a few welcome refinements. Pressing Square sends Snake into a quick dive in any direction, perfect for quickly nipping into cover and out of sight. It's a great addition and one that will quickly become an integral part of your moveset. Otherwise, it's standard third-person business as usual: aiming and shooting with the triggers, changing weapons and items with the D-pad and performing actions with the face buttons.

Snake controls well and moves fluidly, and this ease of navigating the environment lends a sense of freedom when planning your approach. Trust us, you will have to plan. Focus on an enemy through your binoculars for a couple of seconds and you can mark then, highlighting their position. It's exactly the same mechanic we've seen

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△○×□ As before, there are plenty of opportunities to go for a gnarly throat slash.

△○×□ As much as this is a stealth game, there are numerous opportunities for you to go nuts.

in games like *Far Cry 3*, and it works well here, especially in absence of the more traditional radar. Scoping the area from afar, marking guards and planning your method of traversal is more important than it has ever been, lending *Ground Zeroes* the truest-feeling stealth we've yet seen in the series.

Getting about without getting seen at all is pretty tough, and your best bet in most situations is still the silenced tranquiliser pistol. It's still too easy to fling needles at guards from afar and wait for them to drop (why do they never notice they've been shot with a dart?) but harder difficulties will restrict your ammo and force you to be considerate with your shots.

Get close enough and CQC makes itself available, again working similarly to *Peace Walker*. Get behind an enemy and grab him round the neck to gain three options: interrogate him for info, choke him into unconsciousness or quickly kill him with a slice to the throat. Bodies can be picked up and moved, and with an increase in guards patrolling and smarter AI, it's more important than ever to make sure they are well hidden.

If you get spotted or just fancy going full Rambo, it's still perfectly possible to go in all-guns blazing... perhaps *too* possible. One complaint levelled at *MGS* over the years is that it has been perhaps too easy to ignore stealth and play it like a straight shooter, at least on default difficulties. That's still the case here, and a Reflex mechanic actually makes things easier. If Snake is spotted, time will slow for a couple of seconds and a quick press of L2 will snap your aim to your discoverer, making it easy to take him down before an alarm is raised. It's too much of a concession to accessibility, removing the tension that comes with staying unseen. Luckily, Reflex Mode is easily turned off from the options menu. It seems that Kojima and his team knew the idea would prove divisive among fans. There is a score bonus for never using it during a mission, so pro players won't be relying on it anyway.

△○×□ We still find it amazing that Snake can miraculously see down the iron sights on his rifle through an eye patch.

The important thing is that this feels like a *Metal Gear* game. It might sound silly, but fans will know what we mean: that feeling of a game lovingly crafted, thoroughly solid throughout with outstanding graphics and sound as well as a quirky uniqueness. The tone itself is like welcoming back an old friend, stepping back into a world that we've been missing for a few years.

Still, all the quality in the world wouldn't be able to make up for a game so overpriced in the eyes of many. Luckily, *Ground Zeroes* actually has a ton of replay value. We finished it for the first time in around 90 minutes, before going back to the main menu and seeing our total game completion was only nine per cent. There are five side-missions included, all set in the same area but offering different objectives, enemy layouts and challenges. Some are fully action-based, while another tasks you with taking out two specific targets. The last of these extra missions is the PlayStation-exclusive Déjà Vu mission, which recreates various scenes from the original *Metal Gear Solid*.

All five missions should take around 30 to 45 minutes each. With the main story completed twice, once on Hard, all nine hidden XOF patches found and all five side missions done, we still only reached 34 per cent game completion. There is a lot to do here, although some of it is as simple as doing things again on harder difficulties.

It all looks fantastic thanks to Konami's wonderful new Fox Engine. The PS4 has been proven to be the best-looking version of *Ground Zeroes* – running at 1080p compared to the Xbox One's measly 720 – and it shows. From big things like beautiful character models to small effects such as cloth flapping in the wind, *Metal Gear* is once again at the forefront of graphics technology. Unsurprisingly, it sounds great too, with Harry Gregson-Williams back once again to provide the score.

The biggest difference between *Ground Zeroes* and past *Metal Gear* games is that this one feels like exactly that: a game that stands alone, rather than a means with which to tell a story. There are only two main cut-scenes here, one at the beginning and end of the story. Of course, given the short length that's understandable, and we expect *The Phantom Pain* to have many more. Thing is, no one in the industry can make a cut-scene like Kojima. The ending

"IT ALL LOOKS FANTASTIC IN THE FOX ENGINE"

THE LEGENDARY HERO

△ FINISH THE GAME on Hard mode without being seen or killing anyone. We've seen this done, and it was amazing.

KEEP ON ROLLIN', BABY

□ CAN YOU FIGURE out where to find the final XOF patch? It took us a while...

Beaten our trials? Let us know @PlayMag_UK!

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△○×□ Shooting mechanics have remained the same since *MGS4*, although this feels more like *Peace Walker*.

△○×□ Why rely on firearms when a good old-fashioned punch in the face can get the same job done?

△○×□ The main mission in *Ground Zeroes* takes place at night, although some Extra Ops are in daylight.

SECOND SCREEN

Lost? There's an iDroid app for that

MAP!
The most obvious use for a second screen, but for good reason. No need for you to stop moving to see where you need to go.

TAPES!
Queue up audio tapes to play as you... play. Listening to these uncovers certain back-stories and perhaps a secret or two.

BASE!
The Mother Base-building mini-game will be accessible from tablets and phones, allowing you to micromanage your troops.

DATA!
Not sure what a weapon or item does in the game? Take a butchers here, courtesy of your helpful iDroid.

to *Ground Zeroes* is one of the most exciting, heart-in-mouth experiences we've ever had in gaming, as well as featuring one of the few scenes in the medium to ever truly disturb us.

This approach extends to gameplay, with codec calls no longer pausing the action. A button-press calls Miller, elaborating on whatever the player is focusing on. Exposition that would have once been in cut-scenes is now on audio tapes to listen to at your leisure, and the game does not need to be paused to do so. It feels like Kojima understands the way the industry is going. Games are finding new ways to tell stories without copying what we've seen in films.

So yes, *Ground Zeroes* is a triumph: a wonderful introduction to *Metal Gear Solid V* that will whet people's appetites for the main game while giving them plenty to play with as they wait. Still, the fact remains that it is far too expensive. For £20, this would be an easy recommendation, but £30 is simply too much. Still, judged as an isolated experience, *Ground Zeroes* is excellent. Whether you choose to wait for a reduction in price is another matter.

Sam Smith

VERDICT

It's too expensive, but *Ground Zeroes* is an excellent taste of what's to come in *The Phantom Pain*. Make peace with the price or wait for a discount, but make sure you play it eventually.

85%

The Last Of Us: Left Behind

Our final farewell to Ellie and Joel...

DETAILS

PUBLISHER
Sony
DEVELOPER
Naughty Dog
PSN PRICE
£11.99
INSTALL SIZE
5GB
PLAYERS
1
AGE RATING
18+
TWITTER
@TLOUGame

Trophies 6

0 0 0 6

PS3

AND THIS, LADIES and gentlemen, is how DLC should be done. It's far too easy to be cynical about DLC, thanks to so many examples of publishers getting it horrendously wrong – Javik in *Mass Effect 3*, the whole *Street Fighter X Tekken* fiasco, bloody *horse armour* in *Oblivion*. No 'cut from the disc to be released as DLC' accusations can be thrown around here. Not only has *Left Behind* arrived a full eight months after *The Last Of Us* was released to critical acclaim and high-fives, the DLC itself weighs in at a hefty 5GB. More importantly, it's a glorious and important addition to *The Last Of Us*.

You spend the entirety of *Left Behind* in Ellie's shoes, as the DLC jumps back and forth from her friendship with Riley (set before the events of *The Last Of Us*) to her search for a medical kit to patch up Joel (set after he injures himself at the University of Eastern Colorado). It helps plug some of the narrative gaps that *The Last Of Us* never slowed down for and it's also interesting to see how the younger

△○×□ The sections with Riley are fairly enjoyable but when Ellie is trying to find a med kit for Joel, it's her versus the world...

OR YOU COULD TRY △ **I AM ALIVE** Although it's nowhere near the same quality as *The Last Of Us*, both games try to replicate the desperate struggle to survive in a world gone wrong.

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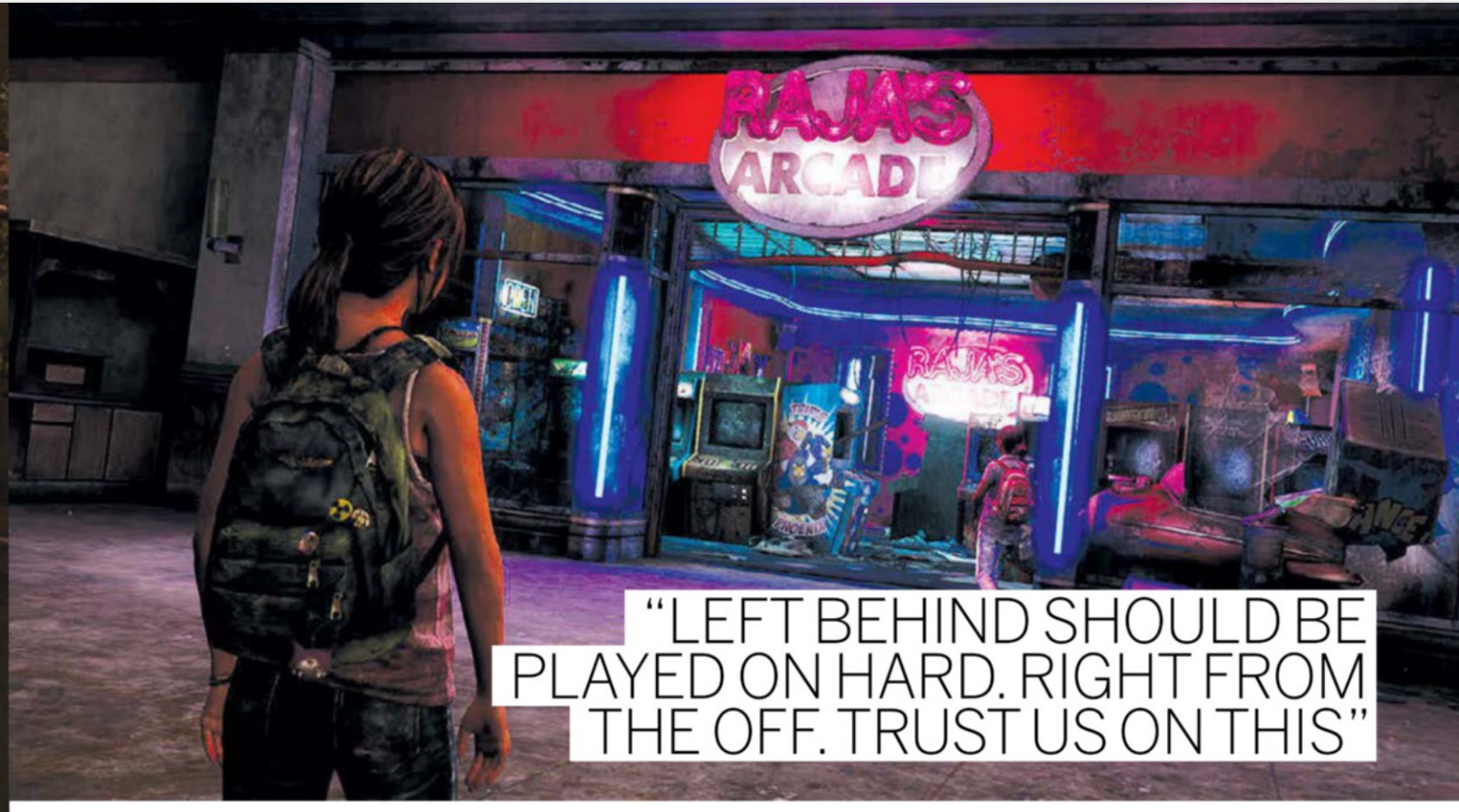


"LEFT BEHIND SHOULD BE PLAYED ON HARD. RIGHT FROM THE OFF. TRUST US ON THIS"

△○×□ There's a Naughty Dog reference tucked away inside this arcade, with a Trophy for those who manage to find it.

△○×□ There are some lovely moments in *Left Behind* with Riley, set before the madness of *The Last Of Us* truly kicks off...

carefree Ellie contrasts with the no-BS Ellie as the story flips between them.

The gameplay is identical to *The Last Of Us*, so you'll still be scavenging for items left around, exploring the environment and picking your way through face-offs against bandits and stalkers. There's one new combat scenario added in *Left Behind* that was never explored in the main game, which we won't ruin here, and although it doesn't add *too* much it does make you go "Ohhh yeah!" as you wonder why you had never even questioned seeing such battles happen in *The Last Of Us*. We've made it sounded more complicated than it is but trust us, you'll know it when you see it.

There are some other nice touches thrown in, too. Becoming the brickmaster with Ellie would be a genuine punch-the-air moment (if that was something anyone above the age of 11 actually did), but in lieu of that, sure, we'll take a Trophy. The only real gripe some will have with *Left Behind* is that it costs £11.99 and when played through on Normal by anyone who doesn't have sausages for fingers, it'll last just over an hour. There's a lot of poking around and optional conversations to discover but because you'll already be familiar with how combat works and the best way to clear out bandits and stalkers, there's not really anything that you're likely to have any trouble with.

Which brings us to our final point – *The Last Of Us* should have been played on Hard, right from the off. The scarcity of resources meant every encounter became desperate if you missed a few precious pistol shots or wasted an item you'd painstakingly crafted with whatever you had scavenged over the previous hours, while the margin of error was so small thanks to the higher damage, the tension would be suffocating. It was no good completing *The Last Of Us* on Normal and then revisiting it on Hard – it was the unpredictability of what would happen next mixed with those other elements that made it so intense.

And so while *Left Behind* should also be played on Hard, we're going to say it *must* be played on Hard. Right from the off. Trust us on this. It'll make the DLC last longer but more importantly, you'll get to experience the nerve-shredding tension that made *The Last Of Us* so extraordinary, as you try and tip-toe around stalkers with only a brick and a prayer to fall back on should things go wrong. With the DLC clocking in at just over an hour, and with *Left Behind* being the final single-player chapter we'll see for *The Last Of Us*, it's worth making this final memory one to really remember and cherish.

Ryan King

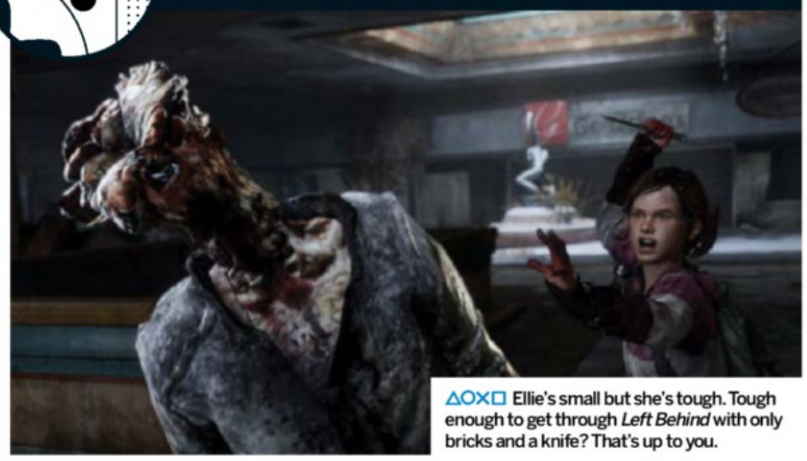
VERDICT

It's short – perhaps a little too short for the price – but *Left Behind* exhibits the same exceptional quality that made *The Last Of Us* one of PS3's finest. Just play it on Hard, yeah?

81%

SHARE

PLAY CHALLENGE



△○×□ Ellie's small but she's tough. Tough enough to get through *Left Behind* with only bricks and a knife? That's up to you.

SHARE THESE FEATS, IF YOU CAN...

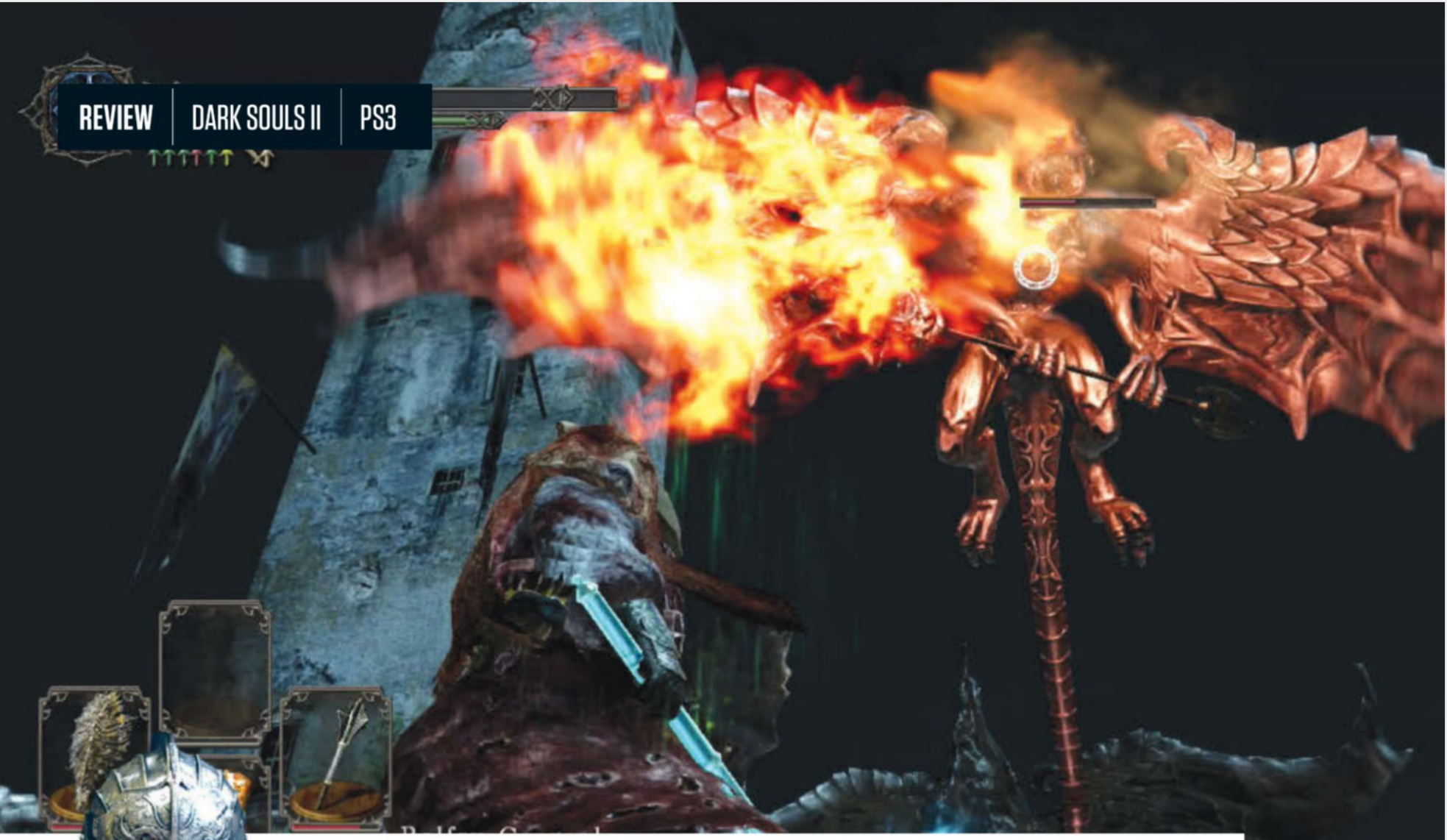
BRICK MASTER

△ **BRICKS ARE THE** most useful weapon in *The Last Of Us* but can you complete the DLC *just* using the brick?

STALKING STALKERS

□ **SEE IF YOU** can take out each stalker with quiet melee kills. We reckon it's just about possible, bar one obvious scenario...

Beaten our trials? Let us know @PlayMag_UK!



Dark Souls II

If only we could be so grossly incandescent

DETAILS

PUBLISHER
Bandai Namco

DEVELOPER
From Software

RELEASE DATE
Out Now

PSN PRICE
£49.99

PLAYERS
1-4

INSTALL SIZE
2.1GB

AGE RATING
16

TWITTER
@NamcoBandaiUK

Trophies 38

1 1 6 2 28

PS3

IT'S REMARKABLE TO see the differences in marketing between the first *Dark Souls* and the sequel. The original flew mostly under the radar, anticipated by the few hardcore fans who had played *Demon's Souls*. But something strange happened: *Dark Souls*, an obscure RPG built around being obtuse and difficult, was so bloody *good* that through word of mouth and critical acclaim the game blew up in popularity and became a big deal.

The difference in approach toward development of *Dark Souls* and its sequel is subtle, but important. The first was an attempt to create something new. Sure, it built on the foundations laid by *Demon's Souls*, but took those ideas and created something incredible. *Dark Souls II* is a sequel: more of the same. It's still excellent, but that lack of innovation – of soul – makes a significant difference.

Once again, it's the story of a nameless warrior cursed by undeath, destined to gradually lose their sanity until they become a wandering, mindless Hollow. There's a bit more explanation this time – an opening cut-scene actually offers some exposition – but the story is still largely left up to the player to discover. Although set in the same world, *Dark Souls II* takes place in a vastly different region to the first and has no direct links to the original game... or does it?

Fans of the original will feel immediately comfortable, as aside from a change in how jumping works (it's still rubbish), gameplay is exactly the same. This is no bad thing, as *Dark Souls* controlled wonderfully, with one of the best melee combat systems in any game. In a game so difficult and reliant on careful reactions, precision control over your character is essential, and *Dark Souls II* delivers. Combat is still as smooth as ever, with each button press giving a single swing of your weapon. Mashing buttons will quickly get you killed, and even getting greedy and attacking one too many times can lead to

IN THIS SERIES

DARK SOULS The original is one of our favourite games of the generation. The fact it's gotten so popular makes us happy. If you haven't played it yet, you suck.

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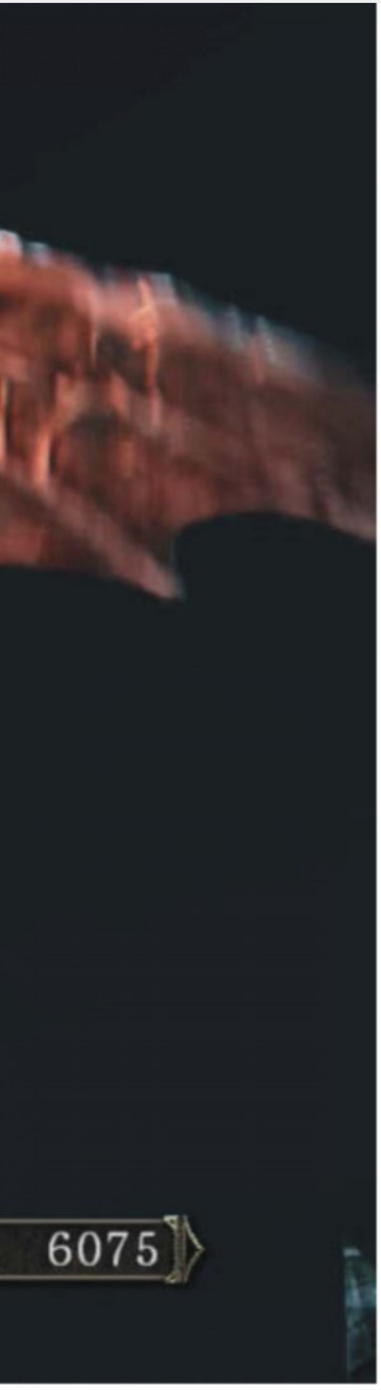
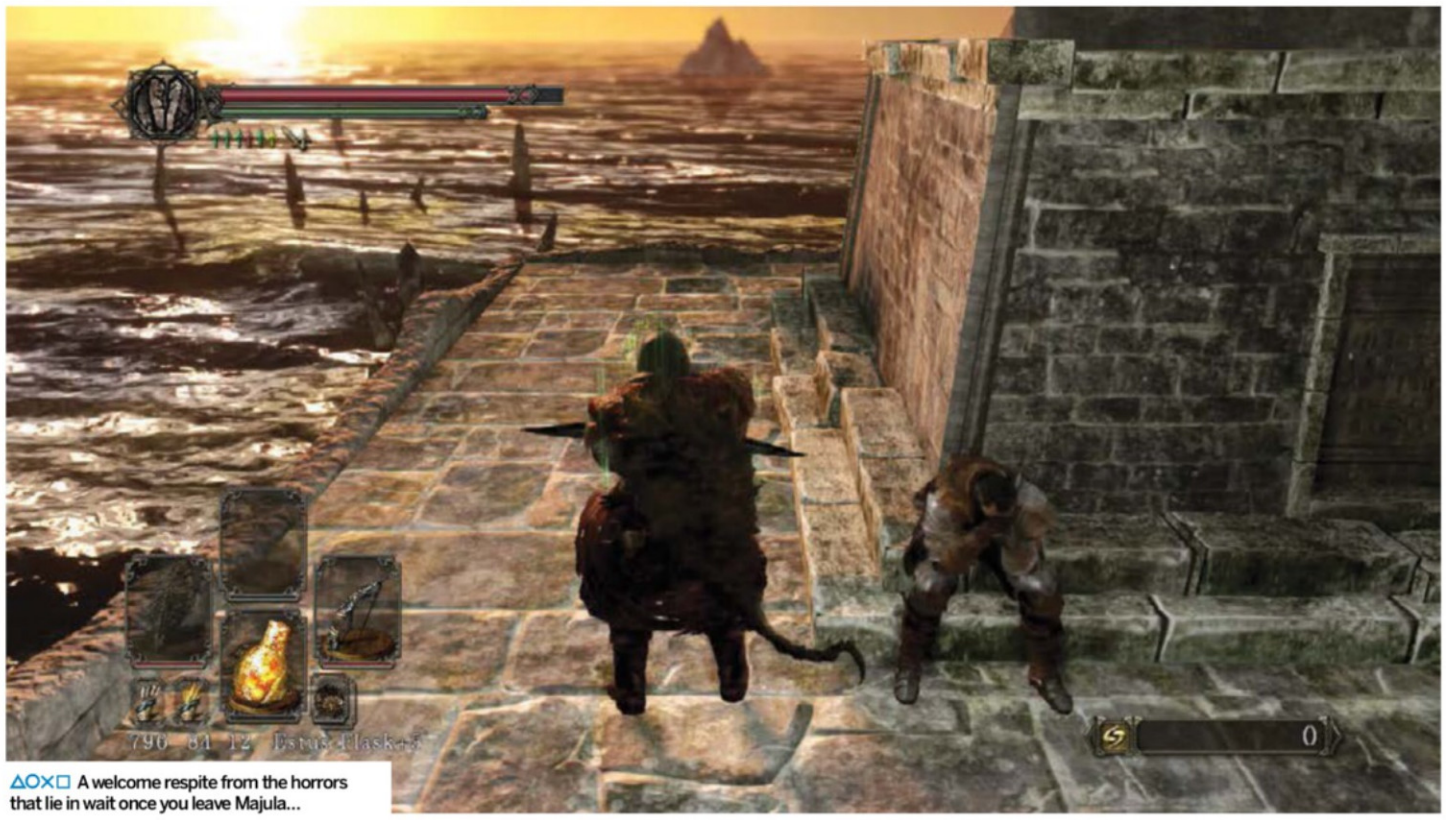




△○×□ A welcome respite from the horrors that lie in wait once you leave Majula...

△○×□ Despite claims that *Dark Souls II* would be more straightforward, there's still plenty of stuff unexplained. What the hell does this mean?

PLAY CHALLENGE

SHARE THESE FEATS, IF YOU CAN...

ONEBRO

△ FINISH THE GAME at Level 1 to earn the honorary title of 'Onebro'. Yep, people have actually done this in the first game.

SPEED RACER

□ ANOTHER FAVOURITE OF the hardcore, speed-running *Dark Souls* is a challenge for the experts. What's your fastest time?

Beaten our trials? Let us know @PlayMag_UK!

massive punishment. Every weapon has unique attack animations and properties, making experimenting and finding the one for you a considerable task.

Of course, if melee isn't your bag, you can opt to use a bow, crossbow or magic instead and fight from a distance. Magic again works similarly, with each spell having a limited number of uses that are recharged at bonfires – as such, even spell-slingers will likely need a melee weapon as backup. It's entirely possible to have a combination of strength and magic power, and the freedom in how to create your play style is one of the best things about the series.

As before, you control how your stats grow, so creating a character based around any play style is entirely possible. Your initial choice of class is slightly more important than before, having a larger effect on your opening stats, but it's still easy to spec your character as you like when levelling up, giving you time to figure out what works for you.

Just because you can play the game as you like doesn't mean that doing so is simple. There are a vast number of stats, each affecting various things, and the huge amount of numbers can be overwhelming at first. Hitting Select on any screen lets you scroll through each stat and see exactly what it does, but the range of choice on offer when levelling up can still make deciding which stat to raise a tough decision. *Dark Souls* revolves around learning and mastering every aspect of the game, and this applies to the stats just as much. You might be confused at first, but you'll come to learn exactly what they mean.

Our new setting of Drangleic is just as sparse and hostile as Lordran, but larger and more open to exploration. The world is still Metroidvania-inspired in design, with several large areas linking up in various ways that reveal themselves as you progress. While the first game followed an essentially linear, 'correct' path, *Dark Souls II* lets players

△○×□ This guy might look familiar to fans. A story connection perhaps, or just laziness on the developer's part?

△○×□ Not every game invasion will be another player – AI-controlled phantoms can invade and mess you up.

△○×□ Majula is this game's equivalent of Firelink Shrine, a hub area of sorts where you can shop and rest up without fear of death.

visit multiple areas at once, all viable for completion at that point in time. There is still an ideal route through the game and a lot of areas will be too difficult early on, but having more of a choice to go elsewhere if you are struggling is welcome.

This emphasis on nipping about the world is apparent as soon as you realise you can warp between bonfires (only ones you've been to, mind) from the beginning of the game. Warping back to Majula – your homebase of sorts – is especially necessary, as unlike previously this is now the only place you can level up. Having to go back to base each time you want to level is irritating, even if it doesn't take long. As a result, we tended to stockpile souls, waiting until the end of an area and then levelling up in bulk rather than doing it bit-by-bit. There's also a blacksmith in Majula, allowing you to start upgrading items earlier, as well as a bunch of Covenants to join. This consolidation of services into the starting area is a simplification, certainly, but not one that necessarily makes the game much easier. There are still other blacksmiths, Covenants and merchants to find, and having a few dotted around Majula feels like an effort to introduce the player to these concepts early.

Dark Souls II is a pseudo-MMO in many

△○×□ Chatting with a severed head. Pretty much anything goes in this game, it would appear.

△○×□ Bosses usually take a few runs to figure out and finally defeat, especially the main ones.

ways. Play when connected to the net and you'll see messages left by other players as well as ghostly apparitions of players in a similar place to you, in their own games. Players can summon others to help them if they are having trouble, but similarly, others can invade your game and attempt to kill you. The constant risk of having someone invade your game is a thrill, and From Software has attempted to get more players involved in PvP with an expanded focus on Covenants.

Covenants function in much the same way, although are slightly better explained. Your Covenant essentially determines your role in PvP combat, from invading and murdering other players to protecting those same players and taking down invaders. There are numerous twists on this idea – defending a particular area from invaders, for example. Fulfilling your Covenant's tasks gains you devotion, levelling up your rank which will eventually grant cool rewards. With better defined Covenants, From Software has refined the concept, aiming to make it a more integral part of the game. That said, it can still be hard to understand without a guide.

A few things being better explained may dim the mysterious atmosphere slightly, but worry not, fans. *Dark Souls*

WHAT YOU'RE SAYING...

I'm waiting for Dark Souls Jnr with an easy platinum & no controller rage!!
Phil Robinson

I still don't dare to play the first one, it's so difficult I can't even open the box.
Gaz Taylor

have to replay dark souls 1 to get my self ready for death
@zzUNKNOWNz

i'm so excited omg I can't wait to dual-wield and protect people who are being invaded and get murdered
@ruben_ferdinand

△○×□ Everything is a mystery, or it least it should be. Get off that wiki!

△○×□ Taking on large groups of enemies at once is basically suicide. Pull one or two, retreat, finish them off and repeat.

"DARK SOULS II IS JUST AS HARD AS THE FIRST GAME, AND EVEN HARDER IN SOME PARTS"

II is just as hard as the first game, and even harder in some parts. Once again, it's never unfair: the rules are clearly laid out, and if you die, it is because you made a mistake. Rushing through without paying close attention is the best way to get yourself killed, and often one mistake is the difference between life and death. If this all sounds like too much hard work, perhaps *Dark Souls* isn't for you, but for gamers who like overcoming seemingly impossible challenges and gradually learning a game inside-out, it's safe to say that there is no series that does it better.

Players still start off as a human, reverting to Hollow form when killed. What this means has changed, however. Being Hollow no longer makes you immune to invasion, and each subsequent death as a Hollow lowers your maximum health slightly, a mechanic similar to that of *Demon's Souls*. The Humanity resource no longer exists, so to regain human form a player must now use a Human Effigy item, of which there are a limited number. It's a far more punishing system, with each death only making your next try more difficult. A ring that limits the amount your max health can drop by is crucial – make sure you find one.

Mostly, *Dark Souls II* is exactly what we expected – more *Dark Souls*, with a new world to explore but few gameplay changes. Far be it from us to complain about more of one of the best games of the generation, but *Dark Souls II* can't help but feel slightly less special as a result. You can't shake that feeling that this is a game built to recapture past glories. The world doesn't feel quite as mysterious, the mood isn't quite as bleak, the monster design not quite as terrifying, and nothing is as amazing or surprising as the first time. It's a standard issue with sequels, and it's not enough of an issue to stop us loving *Dark Souls II*, but it's always there, in the back of your mind.

Otherwise, *Dark Souls II* is outstanding, still a world better than most games and a worthy successor to a game that was, essentially, impossible to follow. Once again, finishing the game once is only the beginning, and New Game+ now does more than simply up the difficulty via numbers: new enemy spawns and different encounters now change things up more, making the experience less familiar. Add in PvP that is so good that many players focus entirely on it, and you've got another wonderful RPG from From Software that seems destined to eat up another few hundred hours of our time. It's not *quite* as good, but it's still excellent.
Sam Smith

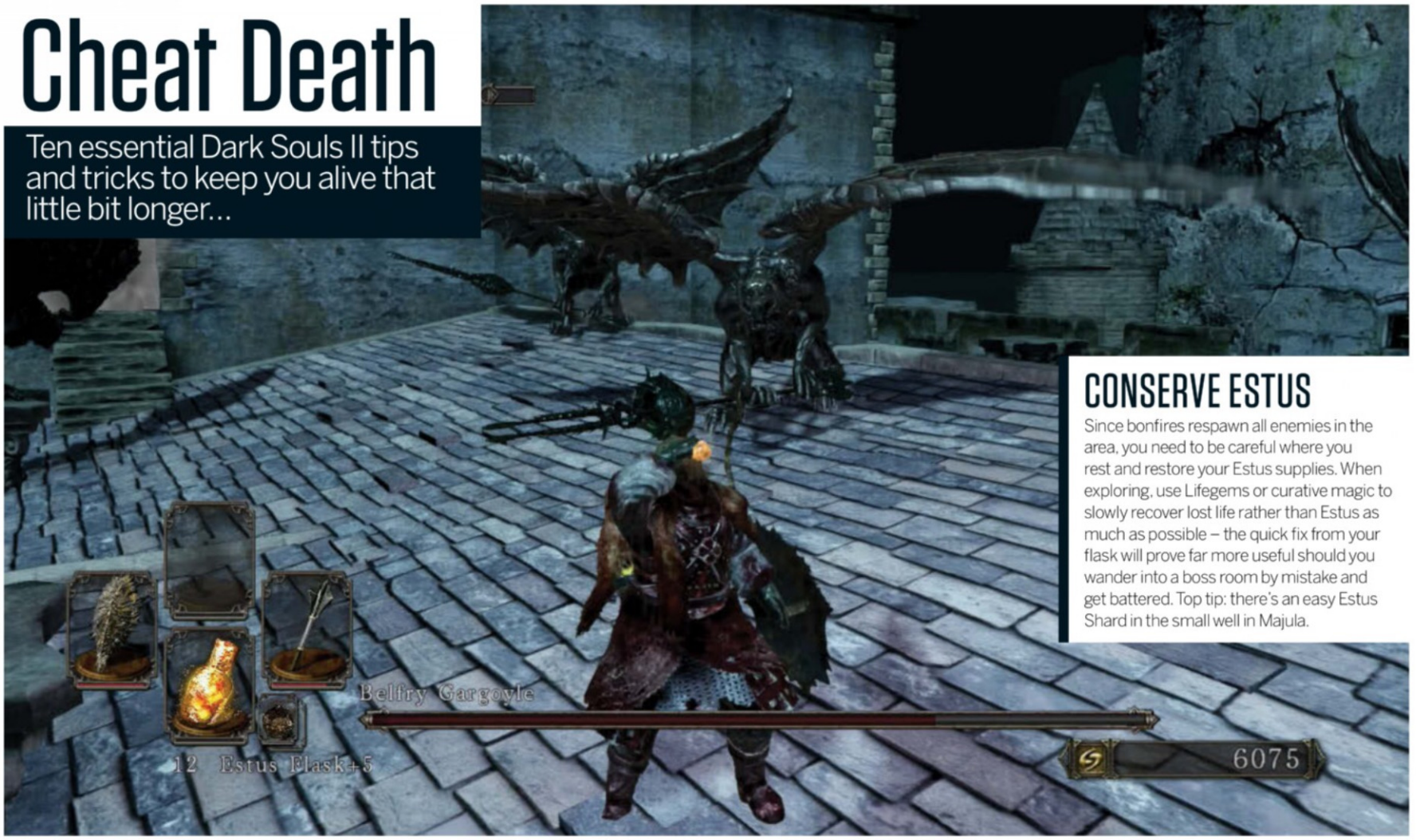
VERDICT

Although it suffers slightly from the sequel curse (sequelitis?), *Dark Souls II* is an excellent return to the gameplay that made us fall in love the first time around. Buy it, play it, adore it.

90%

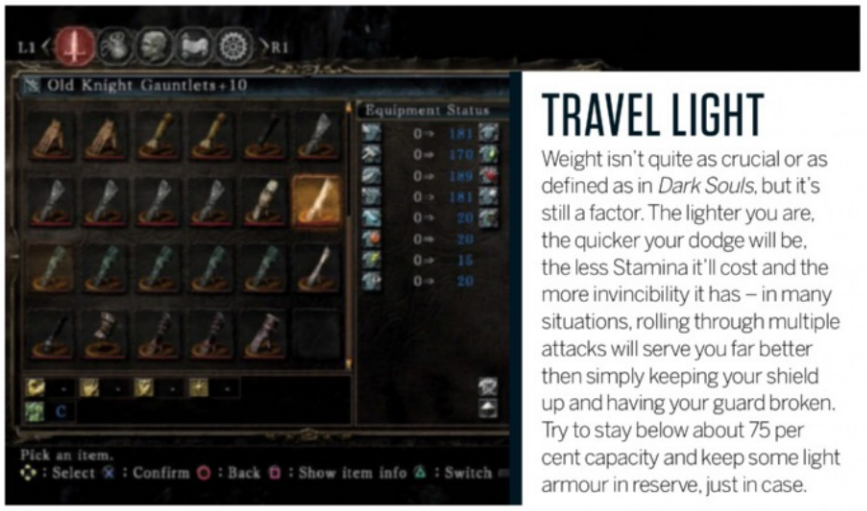
Cheat Death

Ten essential Dark Souls II tips and tricks to keep you alive that little bit longer...



CONSERVE ESTUS

Since bonfires respawn all enemies in the area, you need to be careful where you rest and restore your Estus supplies. When exploring, use Lifegems or curative magic to slowly recover lost life rather than Estus as much as possible – the quick fix from your flask will prove far more useful should you wander into a boss room by mistake and get battered. Top tip: there's an easy Estus Shard in the small well in Majula.

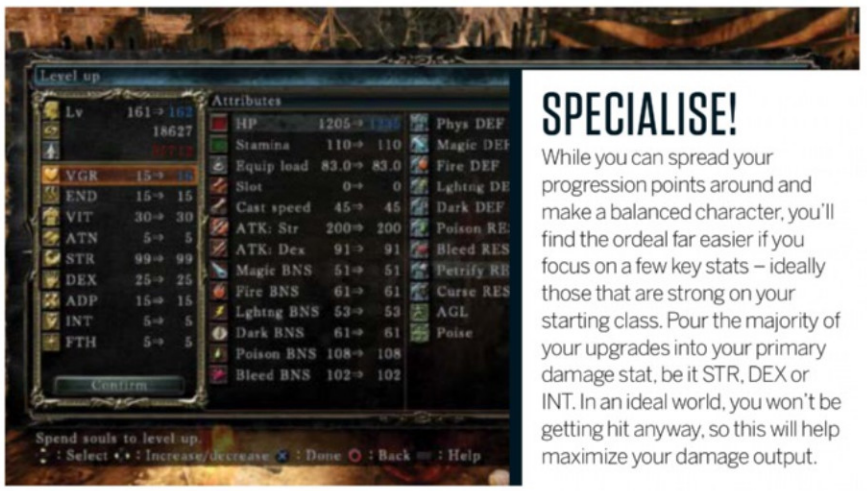


TRAVEL LIGHT

Weight isn't quite as crucial or as defined as in *Dark Souls*, but it's still a factor. The lighter you are, the quicker your dodge will be, the less Stamina it'll cost and the more invincibility it has – in many situations, rolling through multiple attacks will serve you far better then simply keeping your shield up and having your guard broken. Try to stay below about 75 per cent capacity and keep some light armour in reserve, just in case.

HIT CHESTS

We know that you want the treasure and that you want it now. But get into the habit of tapping chests with a weapon before you open them and you'll avoid all manner of horrible deaths, from gas traps to Mimics. The latter are the worst – traps you can roll away from as they activate if you're quick enough but as soon as you see the teeth, you're Mimic food.

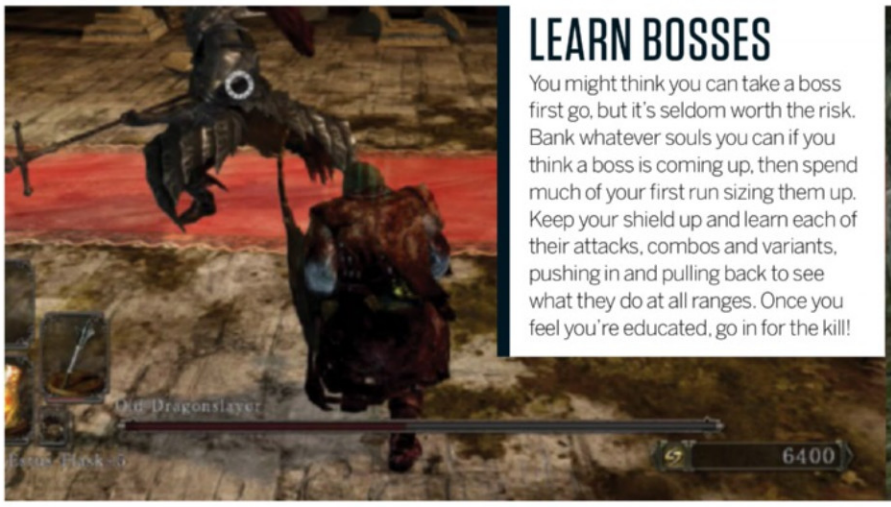


SPECIALISE!

While you can spread your progression points around and make a balanced character, you'll find the ordeal far easier if you focus on a few key stats – ideally those that are strong on your starting class. Pour the majority of your upgrades into your primary damage stat, be it STR, DEX or INT. In an ideal world, you won't be getting hit anyway, so this will help maximize your damage output.

TECH BONUS

Keeping your guard up isn't the only way to avoid damage, you know. In some cases, the two flashier options – rolling and parrying – actually work better. A heavy slam will often shatter your guard but a well-timed roll will leave you plenty of stamina with which to launch a counter-attack. Similarly, even though the parry no longer guarantees a free critical, it can be used to interrupt predictable combos.



LEARN BOSSES

You might think you can take a boss first go, but it's seldom worth the risk. Bank whatever souls you can if you think a boss is coming up, then spend much of your first run sizing them up. Keep your shield up and learn each of their attacks, combos and variants, pushing in and pulling back to see what they do at all ranges. Once you feel you're educated, go in for the kill!

MIX IT UP

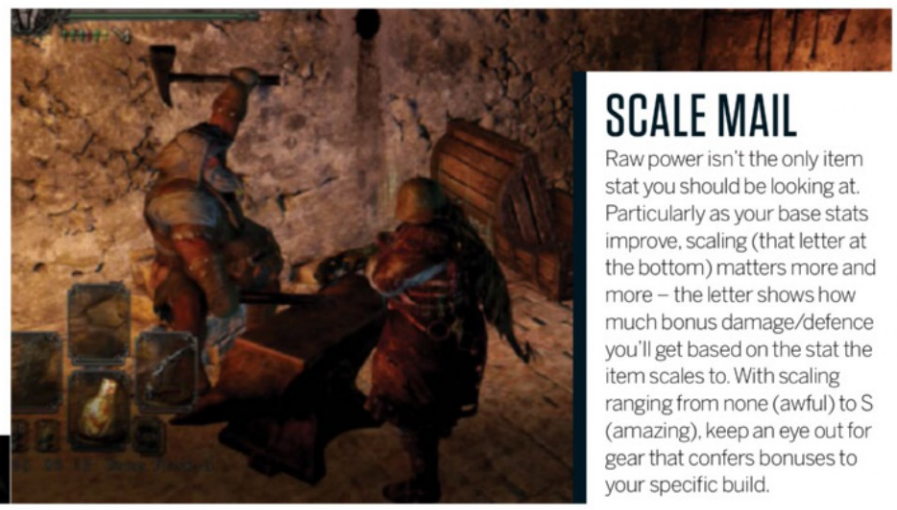
It pays to have multiple offensive options. Whatever your proficiency, you'll likely stumble across a different weapon type that still plays to your strengths – the Dragonrider Bow, for instance, scales with STR making it an awesome ranged option for melee builds, and these kinds of crossover weapons aren't too uncommon. Keep your eyes peeled...

GRIND AWAY

Once you've got a half-decent weapon and have put a few points into your main stat, head down the tunnel from Majula to the Tower Of Flame – the Old Knights here may hit hard but they're so slow that they're dead easy to kill and yield 400 souls a pop. Which, early on, is a big deal. You can always burn a Bonfire Ascetic to bring them back, but bear in mind that they'll be tougher forever.

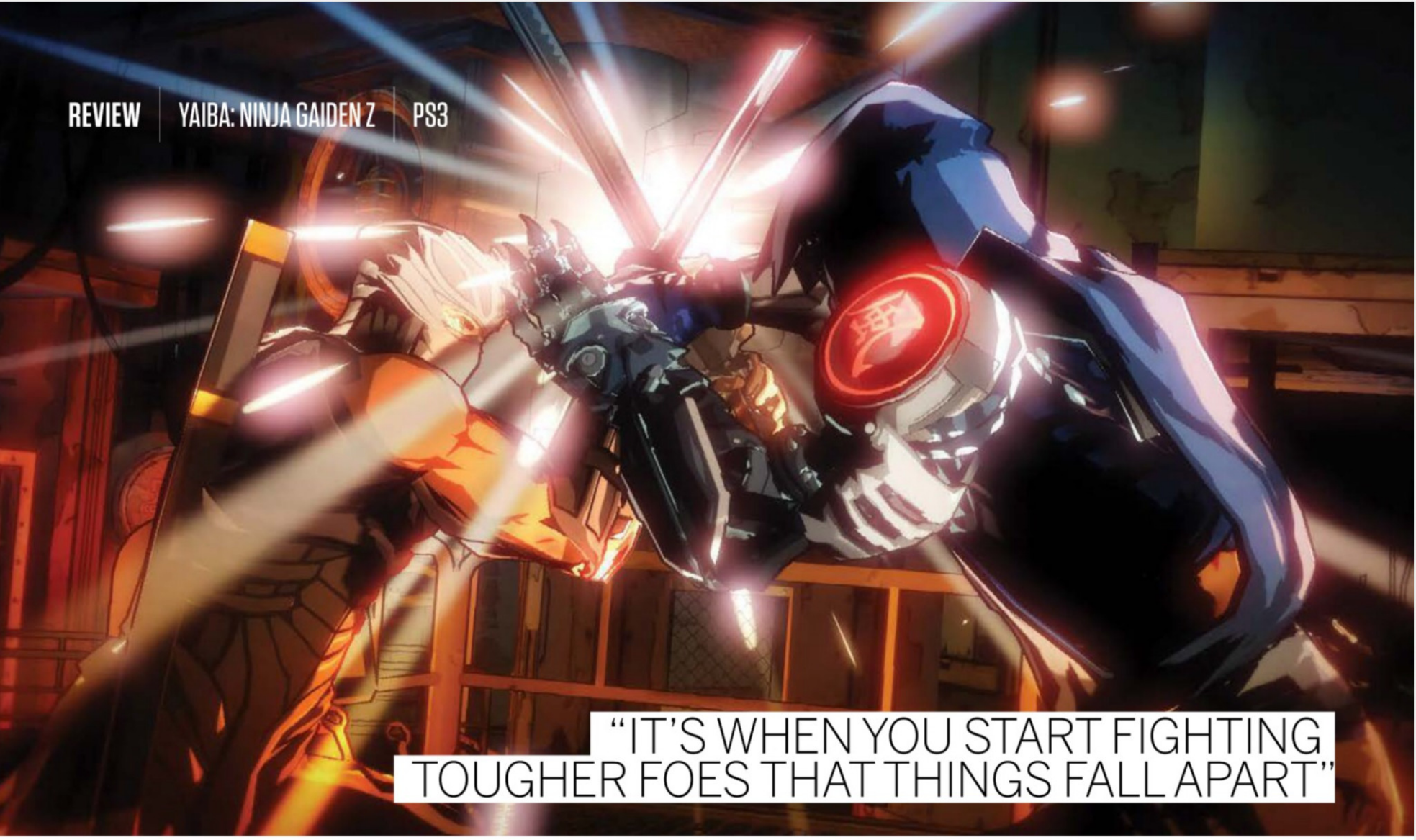
WELL OPEN

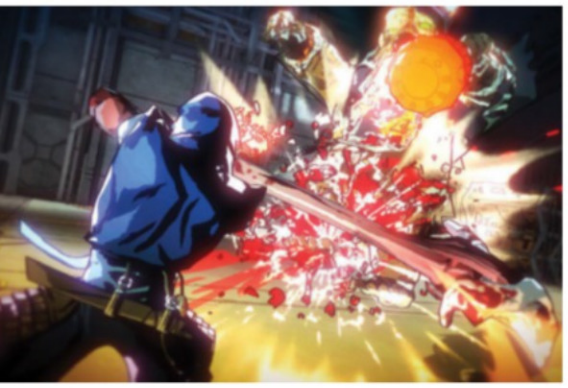
The Cat Ring should be an early purchase – visit the cat in Majula and pick it up for 13,000 souls. Then, once your health is looking good, equip the ring and drop down the hole in the main hub. There are some great items to be found and the first area ain't so bad, although The Gutter is a pain. Still, the Fragrant Branch Of Yore near the bottom opens a new route from Majula, so get on that.



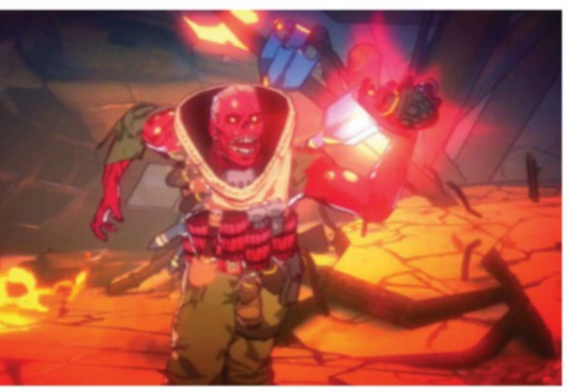
SCALE MAIL

Raw power isn't the only item stat you should be looking at. Particularly as your base stats improve, scaling (that letter at the bottom) matters more and more – the letter shows how much bonus damage/defence you'll get based on the stat the item scales to. With scaling ranging from none (awful) to S (amazing), keep an eye out for gear that confers bonuses to your specific build.





△○×□ With seven chapters, *Yaiba* wouldn't take long if you didn't have to replay some sections.



Yaiba: Ninja Gaiden Z

No ninja, no ninja, no

DETAILS

PUBLISHER
Tecmo Koei

DEVELOPER
Spark Unlimited

PSN PRICE
£44.99

PLAYERS
1

INSTALL SIZE
2.1GB

AGE RATING
18

Trophies 50

1 | 2 | 11 | 36

PS3

WE AREN'T THE types to get angry at games here on **Play**. We love a challenge, and we've played so many difficult games that nothing seems to phase us anymore... or so we thought. *Yaiba: Ninja Gaiden Z* made us so angry we almost threw our television out the window. Good-hard games, like *Dark Souls*, understand how to be challenging without ever being unfair. The difficulty may increase, but with skill and understanding, the player always has a fighting chance, and learning and gradually getting better at the game will see you through.

Yaiba is the antithesis to this concept, a game devoid of understanding in how to make something both difficult and fun. Instead, developer Spark Unlimited simply throws more and more bad guys at the player, assuming that this is enough and that purely adding more is the best solution. It isn't. Get a few hours into *Yaiba* and you'll repeatedly come up against huge walls of bad guys that can overwhelm you incredibly easily. Often, the only way to get past these encounters is to save up and use Yaiba's Bloodlust mode, providing an easy out to an extremely unfair scenario. After repeat attempts and failures at these poorly designed face-offs, even we felt like putting a fist through our screen.

Yaiba is a spin-off of Tecmo's popular *Ninja Gaiden* series, usually starring shinobi supreme Ryu Hayabusa. This time, players join the evil side of the equation, controlling nasty ninja Yaiba, a man far less virtuous than Mr Hayabusa. The game opens with Yaiba and Ryu squaring off, which doesn't last long: Hayabusa whips Yaiba like a bad dog, slicing off his arm and eye, leaving him for dead. Finding himself resurrected with new robot parts by a mysterious organisation and dumped into the middle of a zombie outbreak in Russia, Yaiba agrees to help find the cause while tracking down Hayabusa for revenge.

OR YOU COULD TRY △ **METAL GEAR RISING: REVENGEANCE**
Another tough action game, but one that is actually good. Play this instead.

△○×□ Yaiba can tear parts off certain enemies to use as weapons, but they get used up quickly.

△○×□ Cool as the visual style is, it also means that visibility in combat is horrible.

△○×□ This is a rare example of a game that looks way better in stills than in motion...

If you were expecting a technical, hardcore combat system similar to past *Ninja Gaiden* titles, prepare to be disappointed. *Yaiba* is a far simpler, more mashy affair, although still one with a fair amount of combos. Yaiba has three weapons: the balanced sword, the strong but slow robot arm and the quick but weak flail.

Attacking an enemy to the end of a combo will open them up for an execution, instantly killing them and giving Yaiba a bit of health back. You can quickly unlock the ability to execute ten enemies in succession, and it doesn't take long to find one particular combo that hits the most foes, leaving them all open. For the majority of the game, this one combo would be all you ever need – against standard enemies, at least. Sure, using one move over and over might be missing the point, but it proves that this isn't a deep experience.

But it's when you start fighting tougher foes that things really start to fall apart. Even on default difficulty, these various mini-boss bastards are infuriating, showing a complete lack of competence on the developer's part. These bigger enemies rarely flinch when getting hit, and almost never have a tell for any attacks they are about to make. This results in Yaiba smacking an enemy with no reaction for ages before eating a massive attack you had no way of knowing was coming.

Dashing away after a couple of hits comes to be the only real solution, a boring and slow strategy that still relies entirely on luck. And once you start fighting a few of these utter shits at once, even that becomes completely impossible, Yaiba getting obliterated in waves of attacks that Spark clearly never thought about balancing.

We've played a lot of games in our time, and we're pretty damn good at them. But it's impossible to be good at *Yaiba*. The difference between a good-hard and bad-hard game is enormous, and no amount of player skill will make this kind of bad-hard game enjoyable. Too much of the time you just endure it.

Early shots of *Yaiba* showed a comic book, cel-shaded style that had a ton of potential, but unfortunately the finished product is a smeary, ugly mess that isn't helped by an atrocious fixed camera. It's often far too hard to tell what's going on on-screen, the action obscured by messy blood and smoke effects or taking place virtually off-screen.

The whole game just feels a bit budget, from the way that linked executions aren't linked at all, merely canned animations played one after the other, to the short length and ugly UI elements. It's a spin-off, and it sure feels like one. *Yaiba* had all the potential in the world to be a fun, irreverent take on one of Tecmo's biggest franchises, but instead is little more than a broken, poor pastiche of the genre from a developer that clearly has little understanding of how the genre works.

Sam Smith

VERDICT

***Yaiba* the game is similar to Yaiba the character: vulgar, extremely rough around the edges and unpleasant to be around. With its infuriating game design, *Yaiba* is one to avoid.**

35%

"THE STICK OF TRUTH DOESN'T SO MUCH CROSS THE LINE AS DANCE ACROSS IT WITH ITS COCK OUT"

△○×□ Yes, that is Al Gore. His is far from the only cameo, though it's probably the best of the bunch.

△○×□ Considering what little tykes the boys of South Park are, it's amazing that Jesus still has their back...

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South Park: The Stick Of Truth

Smaller, Shorter And Cut

DETAILS

PUBLISHER
Ubisoft

DEVELOPER
Obsidian

PRICE
£39.99

PLAYERS
1

GENRE
RPG

AGE RATING
18

WEBSITE
southpark.ubi.com

TWITTER
@SouthPark

FACEBOOK
facebook.com/southpark

Trophies 51

1 3 5 42

PS3

IT'S HONESTLY QUITE likely that as long as this giant rock we call home keeps spinning, there will never be a game packed with more fan service than *The Stick Of Truth*. Considering how much is rammed into every single crossover fighter or RPG, it's amazing that Obsidian has managed to outdo the lot working from just a single property, but this is a game without a wasted item – everything you see, hear and do ties in to something that has appeared in one of the show's 250-odd episodes and just trying to spot them all is a game in itself.

It's not all reliving former glories though, to be fair. The new narrative – which sees your created character dropped into the middle of the Colorado kids' ongoing *D&D*-inspired playtime before spiralling out of all control – holds up remarkably well, even with the greatest hits of Matt and Trey blaring constantly in the background. It's almost like a playable mini-series of the show, each major story beat changing up location, characters, tone and theme. Yet while the show joyfully bounds from one topic to the next with zero continuity, *The Stick Of Truth* proves that this is a design choice rather than a copout and that Parker and Stone are perfectly capable of building something more than a modular 20-minute gross-out comedy play set.

Don't expect that tone to change at all, though. When there's a fart button, an aborted foetus boss and numerous unflinching references to rape, AIDS and paedophilia, it's pretty hard to claim that the whole thing isn't played for shock value and/or guilty laughs, depending on the recipient. *The Stick Of Truth* doesn't so much cross the line as dance across it with its cock out and a torrent of vulgarity pouring from its mouth, to the point where some scenes have even had to be censored for the European release. We've seen the offending clips and while one is missed on a gameplay level (a cut abortion mini-game is reprised later in the story, which doesn't really work when you didn't get to play it the first time), the rest are arguably made funnier by the inoffensive muzak and detailed written description of what you're not seeing. Bar that one exception, it feels just enough like an intentional move and falls one or two cuts short of getting annoying, plus you can always YouTube the missing scenes if you really want to see... well, terrible things.

But we've dwelled long enough on the shock factor and references – by this point in the review, you probably want to know if the actual game is any good. Fair enough. Yes. Yes it is. With the RPG veterans at Obsidian on programming duty (coders who have previously worked on the *Baldur's Gate* and *Fallout* games), we were never really in much doubt that the game would deliver in that regard. It's a little old-school in some respects – in that it rewards rather than discourages item spamming and has an inverted difficulty curve like many older RPGs, meaning it actually gets easier as it goes on – but the fusion of turn-based and real-time aspects works brilliantly. Timed inputs can power-up attacks or reduce damage and while it's not essential to hit them all, it does make one hell of a difference.

It's not lacking any major RPG staple we can think of outside of possibly

OR YOU COULD TRY

DISGAEA 4: A PROMISE UNFORGOTTEN
NIS's outing has more of an emphasis on strategy, less edgy humour and more hardcore stat management.

crafting, in fact. Skill trees, level-based gear, damage numbers, status ailments, party configuration... it's all present and correct. But this only makes it even more galling that *The Stick Of Truth* is only about ten hours long. If you were to miss the point and rush through the story admittedly, but when it's not even close to double that for 100 per cent completion, it still feels like these well-developed mechanics are only just starting to come into their own. The 'Redeem Code' and 'PlayStation Store' options on the title screen suggest that this might not be the extent of the content for all that long (did someone say Season Pass?) but for now, it caps out at level 15 and really does feel like it ends just when it was just about to properly get going.

The real question, though? No, not 'what would Brian Boitano do?', silly – is the game being that short actually a problem? It depends entirely on how you look at it, frankly. As an RPG, there's an argument to be made that it does kind of need to be a bit longer in order to give the later skills and unlocks a chance to shine. But as a comedy-fuelled game, it's amazing that it can come in anywhere close to 15 hours and still be funny by the end. It's well-paced and constantly entertaining, so you have to wonder whether this aspect would have been lost if the game had stretched. Or, actually, if that adding much content would simply have led to yet another delay, which new publisher Ubisoft simply couldn't afford.

△○×□ It's a two-man battle system, with your created character joined by one of the four boys, Jimmy or Butters, each with different abilities.

What this protracted development has allowed the team to do, though, is create an experience that both looks and feels like an interactive episode (or ten) of the potty-mouthed cartoon. It's faithful to the source material in every respect and since this is the first time Matt and Trey have had to actually map out the town, this is your first and only interactive opportunity to explore South Park in its entirety. To assist in this, powers and abilities learned over the course of the story can often be used outside

"AN EXPERIENCE THAT BOTH LOOKS AND FEELS LIKE AN INTERACTIVE EPISODE"

△○×□ Most status ailments have unfamiliar names, but their effects tend to be typical RPG fare so it's not too complicated.

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SUMMON STUPID

There are plenty of amusing side quests in *The Stick Of Truth*, but a select few reward you with summon items – one-shot consumables that call upon classic characters to pop in, deal ridiculous damage then bugger off. These can't be used against bosses, but they're perfect if you find yourself in over your head – they even refresh once per game day, meaning you can get several uses out of each so long as you're not too stingy. The boss stipulation means they're no use in the toughest battles anyway, so there's no real drawback to using them at the first sign of danger. You'll probably do that anyway just to see what happens.

of battle. Ranged weapons can break or dislodge out-of-reach objects, naked flames can be farted on to cause explosions while some of the later abilities allow for even more out-there methods of getting about. Often, these same techniques can also be used to avoid battle completely.

Not that you'll want to, since the battles are perhaps the strongest part aside from the wonderful style. The two-man team approach works well, and even when you're outnumbered the ability to switch out someone like Butters for a support character with more AOE attacks like Cartman with his unconventional 'magic' means that you're never entirely screwed over. Allies with quicker, more powerful abilities are the ones you'll come to rely on usually – while bard Jimmy's musical buffs are entertaining the first few times, you soon won't want to sit through them for a power-up when other kids could just be piling on the damage. Given the game's brevity, there's a surprising lack of repetition outside of skill-related comments so as long as you mix things up, you shouldn't experience too much RPG battle quote fatigue.

Short as it is, *The Stick Of Truth* is a dense and hilarious journey through the best bits from 20 years' worth of poorly animated controversy. Simple mechanics mean that it can be enjoyed even by those who don't know that Kyle's mom is a bitch, but the wealth of references mean that true fans will rarely go more than a minute without a cameo, line or secret that turns a funny situation into a hilarious one. And it's this attention to detail that makes the game an easy recommendation to series fans – it's really quite good, m'kay.

Luke Albigés

VERDICT

Short but sweet, *The Stick Of Truth* is the best *South Park* game to date (not that that's saying much) and manages to hold up both in terms of RPG mechanics and comedy value.

81%

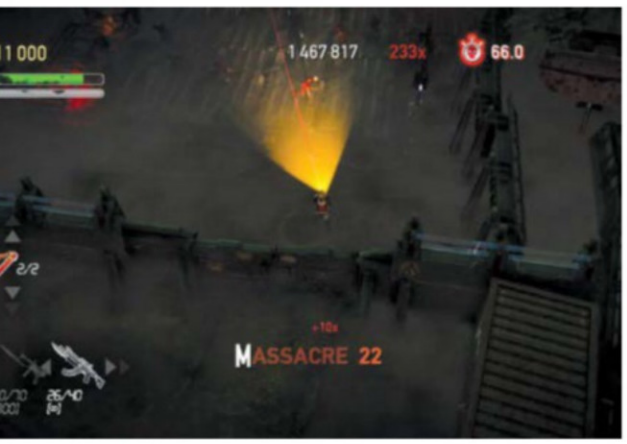
IN THIS SERIES

SOUTH PARK RALLY A certain plumber made kart racing games extremely popular, with this being one of the worst imitators.

Dead Nation: Apocalypse Edition

If you're still Twitching, you're still alive

△○×□ It's a dark game, but your always-on flashlight offers some clarity. Watch your six, though...



△○×□ Your multiplier rises quickly but getting hit will knock a huge chunk out of it instantly.

DETAILS

PUBLISHER Sony

DEVELOPER Housemarque

RELEASE DATE Out Now

PRICE £11.99

PLAYERS 1-2

AGE RATING 18+

TWITTER @DeadNation

INSTALL SIZE 2.5 GB

Trophies 31

1 6 10 24

MARCH'S PLAYSTATION PLUS line-up certainly won't go down as a classic, but it did seem to confirm an interesting trend – every month, the PS4 game offered for free has been a newly launched title, with *DriveClub* still slated to do exactly the same if the team can ever get it finished. Having the service fill in backlog blanks on PS3 and Vita is one thing, but on PS4 you're getting a brand new game for far less than cost price every single month.

The cynical argument here is that nobody was going to buy a slightly shinier version of a fair twin-stick shooter on PS4 anyway, so Sony just gave it away and hopes to make a little cash when it gets cycled out of PS Plus. But we reckon there's more to it than that – *Dead Nation* offers the best implementation of interactive streaming so far and the easiest way for Sony to sell the masses on this little-known feature is to give them a freebie that showcases it perfectly.

In a world where hundreds of thousands of monkeys are still bashing away at a monster-catching typewriter in the hilarious car crash that is Twitch Plays Pokémon, the world seems to be waking up to the fact that there's more to streaming than just lewd comments, abuse and trolling. *Dead Nation*'s original five difficulty settings return as they were, joined by a sixth, dubbed Broadcast+, which can only be played while streaming. This allows viewers to vote on buffs and debuffs for the player every minute or so, brilliantly developing a relationship between participant and watchers – cocky streamers will most likely get a barrage of penalties and difficulty increases, while more amiable players might be able to sway some to vote for additional ammo or other brief perks. We've seen both happen; turns out the internet rather refreshingly isn't entirely made of trolls, after all. Just the vast, vast majority. Cleverly, voting also triggers zombie spawns to be named after ill-wishing Twitch viewers, meaning the player can kill off and get revenge on anyone who would make their life more difficult. It's ingenious, it's addictive for both sides and it's just the beginning of something far bigger.

The game itself, aside from this notable addition, goes almost entirely unchanged. It's still the same solid twin-stick shooter it was on PS3 a few years back, with survival horror influences meaning ammo for all bar the most basic weapons is always in short supply, most in-game light comes courtesy of your gun-mounted torch and no object can be trusted not to be hiding a cheeky zombie or 50. It's tough too – even on easier difficulties, special zombies and even just packs of regular ones can ruin the ill-prepared, while Grim difficulty and the two unlockable ones above it will take serious

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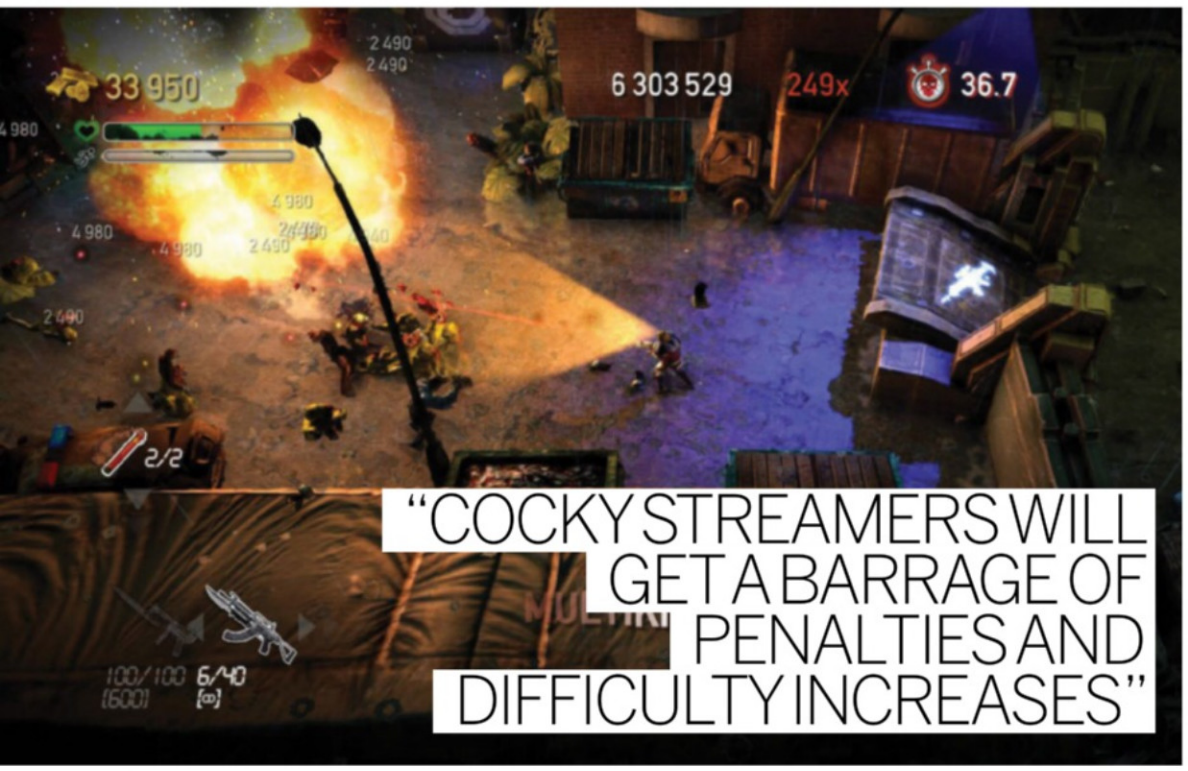
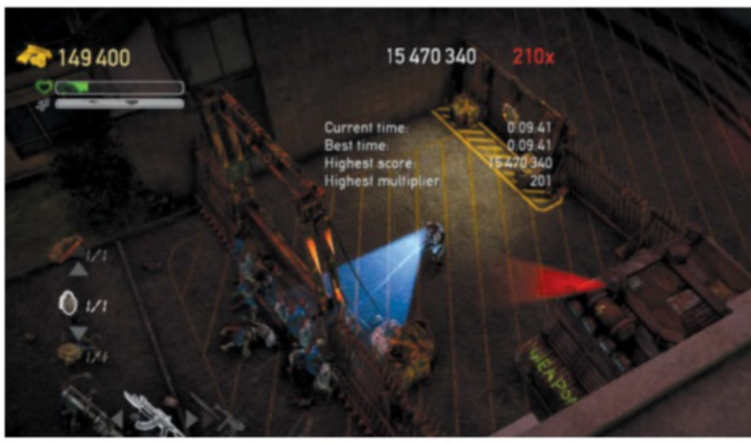
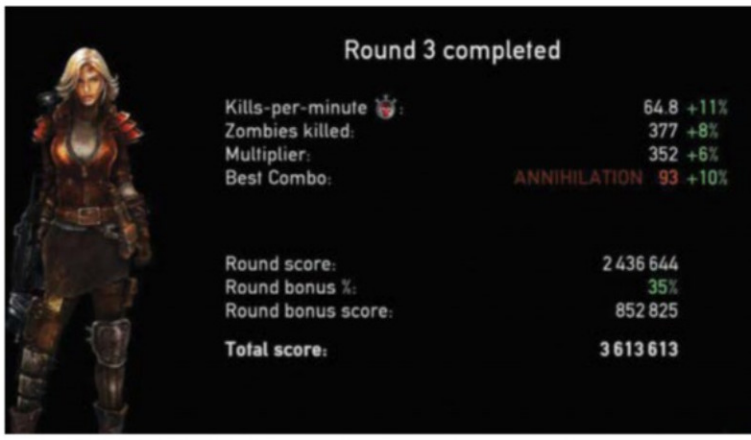


"COCKY STREAMERS WILL GET A BARRAGE OF PENALTIES AND DIFFICULTY INCREASES"





△○×□ Emphasis on story and characters is rare in games like this, but it works fairly well.

△○×□ Most special zombies can be dropped fairly easily, but Cutters can one-shot you if they catch you off-guard.

△○×□ How high can you climb up the leaderboards?

BROADCAST+

It's not for gentle souls

Well, this is easy. If you're going to stream *Dead Nation*, your adoring (read: slur-slinging) public will demand that you do so on new interactive difficulty level, Broadcast+. Voting on perks and penalties is text-based, which can clog up the chat feed with more hashtags than a *DriveClub* marketing presentation, so you might want to set up a second device running Twitch so you have a better view of the chat box. Only that means looking away from the screen. And reading Twitch comments. Neither is a particularly great idea...

patience, knowledge and skill to so much as make a dent in. Well, they did call it the *Apocalypse Edition*...

That subtitle, incidentally, refers not only to the crushing difficulty, improved visuals and social features but to the fact that the DLC comes as part of the package. This is great news, since the additional PS3 content is arguably better than the core game – two new points-focused modes play to the strengths of the clever scoring mechanics without any of the superfluous story rubbish, with branching paths and gruelling waves of enemies enough to test even the most seasoned players and full leaderboard support offering both longevity and some degree of feedback on your run. We've already put more time into the Arcade and Endless modes than the main campaign, though it would have been nice to see the Trophy list change in the jump from PS3 – since these new modes were DLC when the lists were first drawn up, there are fewer Trophies for success here than in the inferior main game, sadly.

It's something of a shame that even in this definitive version, there are still aspects of *Dead Nation* that were flagged up at the time as weak which have gone untouched. Weapon balance is all over the place, complex scoring mechanics still aren't particularly well explained and the campaign is still something of a slog. Broadcast+ potentially addresses all three complaints and the rest to some degree, but it can't be left up to the public to balance games and make them work properly – we've come to learn that most Twitchers just want to spam nasty option #B and make the player suffer while mocking them, so trusting this mob with the delicate task of balancing the game as well doesn't really seem like the most logical of plans.

We're not sure which braindead horde is scarier, actually – *Dead Nation*'s legions of zombies or the impossible number of trolls on Twitch who just want to watch everything burn. We're leaning towards the latter, but we're not sure whether that's more due to experience with the game or inexperience with a vocal audience who seem to want nothing more than to tell us how much we suck, even when we don't. This is a marginally improved version of a decent game with one standout feature – if you want to taste the future and aren't afraid of trolls, fire it up, kill some zombies, ignore the abuse and have a lovely time.

Luke Albigés

VERDICT

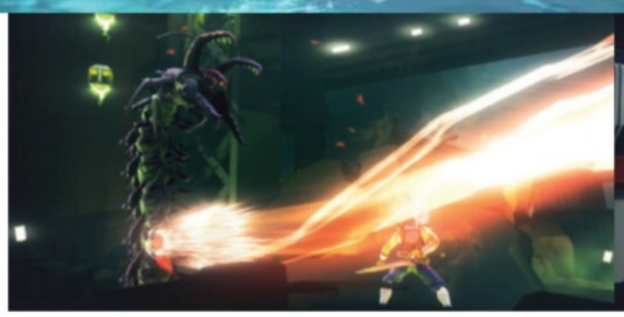
A decent twin-stick shooter with one outstanding feature. If you thought streaming was nothing more than a passing fad, this glimpse of things to come might change your mind.

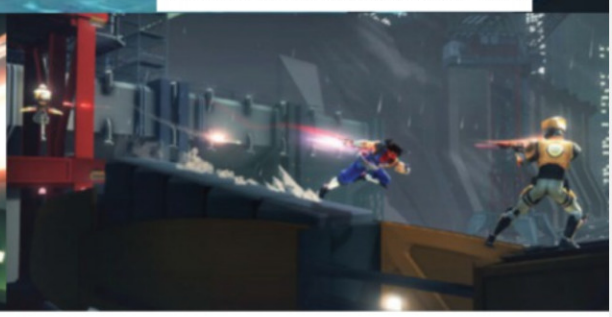
74%

OR YOU COULD TRY

RESOGUN The studio's PS4 launch title is without doubt the better game, but we can't wait to see a fusion of *Resogun*'s mechanics and these social features.

△○×□ Boss battles toy with the game's mechanics occasionally, but more often than not mashing will still see you come out on top.





Strider

A scarf-hearted return

DETAILS

PUBLISHER Capcom
DEVELOPER Double Helix
PSN PRICE £11.99
PLAYERS 1
AGE RATING 12+
TWITTER @StriderOfficial
INSTALL SIZE 2.9Gb

Trophies 31

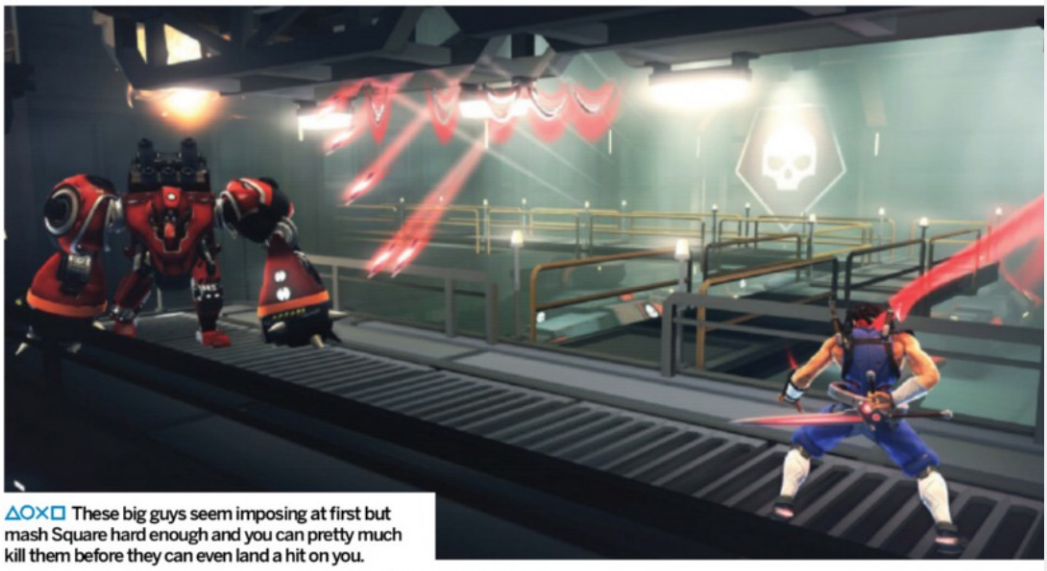
1 3 20 7

PS3

THE 16-BIT ERA is an absolute goldmine for modern developers. Gaming's formative years gave the world all kinds of classic franchises that would live long in the memory and while some companies (Capcom, Sega and the rest of the old guard) still rely on brands that were born in the Nineties, there are plenty of other beloved franchises and characters that have fallen through the cracks. The *Shenmue* Defence Force will never let the dream die but there are all kinds of properties waiting in the wings for another shot at the big time, from *Earthworm Jim* to *Power Stone*. And while his cameo appearances in fighters like *Marvel Vs Capcom* have helped *Strider* fans through the 15 years without a starring role for Capcom's ninja, it's unlikely that this is the revival of the hero that so many hardcore retro fans have been holding out for all this time.

It's not so much that *Strider* is a bad game, more that it's just one that never really lives up to its promise. Given that this is a game from the team behind Xbox One mashfest *Killer Instinct*, it's hardly surprising that combat boils down to how fast you can break your expensive new controller by slapping the Square button rather than demanding any skill. Once you realise that speed is everything, battles that previously seemed impossible will be over in seconds – it's not the most satisfying of experiences.

That said, this magical ninja mashing technique does offer regular gameplay an incredible sense of pace and power. You can scream through entire areas blades flailing and it's almost as if there were never any enemies in your way which, coupled with Strider's suitably nimble movement, speeds things along and mimics the flow of the arcade original somewhat. Yes, it feels good during general errand running but when it comes to more important battles, those same mechanics just don't cut it. Even once you start unlocking the extra elemental abilities, there's still so little actual depth to the combat that it's shown up by countless similar indie titles – *The Dishwasher* wipes the floor with *Strider*,



△○×□ These big guys seem imposing at first but mash Square hard enough and you can pretty much kill them before they can even land a hit on you.

OR YOU COULD TRY

THE DISHWASHER: DEAD SAMURAI It's only on 360 but this indie game is a far better 2D action game than *Strider* – it's basically a side-scrolling *Devil May Cry*.

△○×□ Strider's arsenal is pretty cool by the tail end of the game, but it's likely that you'll have given up by that point. Or broken your controller.

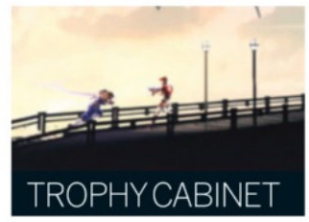
for instance, and it simply shouldn't be the case that a one-man project trumps one of Capcom's legends.

It doesn't help that there's no real feeling of impact (or any feedback at all) to combat, or even platforming to a lesser extent. It all just feels very floaty and vague, two words you never want to see associated with something that is trying to pass itself off as a hardcore action game. It's only bosses that present any challenge but it's here that the combat's shortcomings come to the fore. Sure, things improve as you power through the game and unlock all the upgrades and abilities, but it's a fairly short game and by the time you're at full power, the game is already starting to wrap up.

Far better is the design, although even then you can't help but feel that the team hasn't gotten the most out of the open-plan structure. Backtracking is fine in the context of such a confined game and you'll inevitably spot a bunch of routes that you inexplicably don't have the power to explore yet as you smash your way through the main campaign. A few obvious areas need to be returned to later in the game once you have unlocked new abilities and upgrades, but most of the 'secrets' may as well have giant neon arrows that scream 'SECRET THINGS ARE HERE, COME AND GET THEM EVIL BAD ENEMY NINJA MAN' plastered on top of them. From map to missions, this reeks of a game developed by people who loved *Super Metroid* back in the day, but people who clearly don't understand just what was so good about Nintendo's exploration-led platformer. There's no shame at all in failing to topple a classic, but there's has to be *some* in copying a format without ever truly realising (or, to be fair, demonstrating an understanding of) why it worked so well previously.

Bonus modes, challenges and the ever-pointless unlockable artwork add a degree of longevity if these things even matter to you but otherwise, *Strider* is a pretty forgettable evening of caning around muted environments while smashing the Square button as if your life depends on it. It improves with every upgrade you collect and is actually quite good fun by the end. But by the time it reaches that point, it's already too late – there's only a couple of hours of game left to actually enjoy. We wanted *Strider* to make a comeback as much as the next retro fans... just not like this.

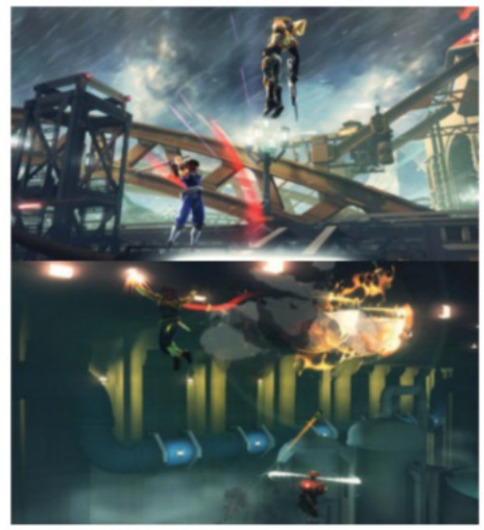
Luke Albigés



TROPHY CABINET

HEALTH NUT There's backtracking involved in a lot of the Trophies. You'll need to run back through the game once you've unlocked all the powers to reach some of them.

SPEED DEMON It's not the longest game in the world but even so, getting through it in under four hours will take solid knowledge of the route and enemy patterns.

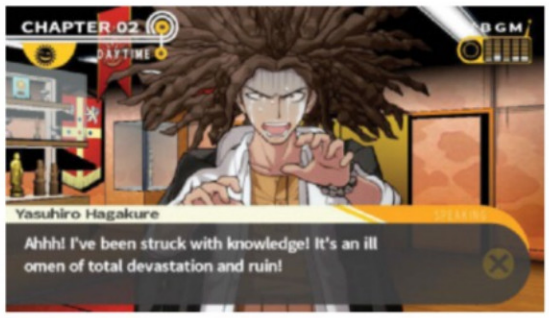


VERDICT

Decent towards the end but dull and unsatisfying up to that point. It's great to have Strider back, but he could be put to far better use in a game that does the franchise justice.

62%

"IT'S A GREAT PREMISE, SOWING SEEDS OF SUSPICION AMONG THE STUDENTS, CREATING A CONSTANT SENSE OF PARANOIA"



△○×□ Never knowing who will be the next to die lends an air of paranoia to the whole game. Nobody is safe...

Danganronpa: Trigger Happy Havoc

And we thought our school lives were bad

DETAILS

PUBLISHER
NIS America

DEVELOPER
Spike Chunsoft

PSN PRICE
£34.99

PLAYERS
1

INSTALL SIZE
1.3 GB

AGE RATING
16

TWITTER
@NISAinEurope

Trophies 38

1 5 5 27

VITA

THERE SEEMS TO be endless mileage in the 'trap a bunch of teenagers together and make them kill each other' concept. It was great in *Battle Royale*, it was surprisingly still great in *The Hunger Games*, and guess what? It's bloody great again in *Danganronpa: Trigger Happy Havoc*.

Danganronpa is a Japanese visual novel on Vita, and merely typing that sentence put a smile on our faces. It's a massively niche genre on a relatively niche system, so the fact that the game even made it to our shores is fantastic enough. That it turns out to be really good is icing on a very tasty cake.

The game takes place in Hope's Peak Academy, a high school where only the absolute masters of their field can attend – whatever that field is. Every student is the 'ultimate' something, from the ultimate writing prodigy or ultimate swimming star through to the ultimate bike gang leader and even the ultimate gambler. The exception is your character, Makoto, a thoroughly average student who wins an incredibly rare chance to attend the school, making him the 'ultimate lucky student'.

Turning up for his first day at school, Makoto blacks out and awakens inside to find all exits and windows barred, trapped along with 14 other new students and forced to partake in a bizarre game by the strange, two-tone bear Monokuma. If any student wishes to leave the school, they must murder another – and get away with it. After a murder has occurred, a class trial takes place. If the guilty party is correctly identified, they are executed and life for the others goes on. If not, everyone else is killed and the murderer gets to go free.

It's a great premise, sowing seeds of suspicion among the students, creating a constant sense of paranoia. Thing is, it

△○×□ The sequel is coming to Europe later this year. Trust us when we say this is excellent news.

△○×□ Despite the over-the-top designs, the characters of *Danganronpa* are surprisingly easy to relate to.

wouldn't work as a story or a game if the characters weren't worth caring about, but *Danganronpa* does an excellent job of creating a cast of relatable people that really get their emotional hooks into you. The anime art may be stylised and over the top, but the excellent writing and translation leads to a cast of characters you will come to care about.

There's a tad more gameplay in *Danganronpa* than other visual novels, albeit not much. The hero gets free time every now and then to wander around the school and spend time with who they like. Here, the game almost resembles a dating sim, although *Danganronpa* finds some clever ways to subvert the tropes those familiar with the genre will know. This is a life or death situation, after all, and these young men and women have more important things to worry about than who fancies who.

Once a murder occurs, you can investigate by tapping on aspects of the environment, similar to the *Phoenix Wright* games. This isn't an irritating pixel-hunt, as a press of triangle will highlight everything in the area you can interact with. After you've had a poke around, the best part of the game begins: the trial.

Danganronpa is an incredibly stylish game, and this is never more obvious than in the class trials. Pumping trance music swells in the background as the students debate the facts.It's important to keep an eye on contradictory statements and shoot them down with 'truth bullets', as well as taking part in mini-games like the excellent one-on-one rhythm-action debates. If it all sounds like nonsense, that's because it is, but it's extremely compelling. Behind all the madness lies a mystery that must be solved, and deducing the true culprit is always a thrill.

All the pitfalls of the visual novel genre still apply, including the large issue of replayability – once you know the story, that's pretty much it. Still, if you are a fan of the genre, this won't be a problem, and if you aren't, *Danganronpa* is not the game to convince you otherwise. Everyone else should pick up and enjoy one of the most exciting, brain-twisting adventures on a PlayStation system.

Sam Smith

MEET YOUR NEW FRIENDS

MONDO OWADA
Ultimate Biker Gang Leader

Owner of an outstanding pompadour, Mondo comes across as a deviant youth but actually shows a large amount of honour and reliability.

AOI ASAHINA
Ultimate Swimming Pro

A swimming champ who makes up in athletic skill what she lacks in smarts, Aoi is a fun, kind character in a game filled with horrible bastards.

BYAKUYA TOGAMI
Ultimate Affluent Progeny

Byakuya starts out mean, but ends up becoming quite a cool dude as the game goes on. Plus, he looks faintly annoyed all the time. We like that.

KYOKO KIRIGIRI
Ultimate ???

Your requisite mysterious badass, no one knows what Kyoko's field of excellence is, but she seems wise beyond her years and extremely intelligent.

VERDICT

Playing like a mixture of *Phoenix Wright*, *Virtue's Last Reward* and *Persona*, *Danganronpa* is a compelling and thrilling visual novel with great writing and characterisation.

85%

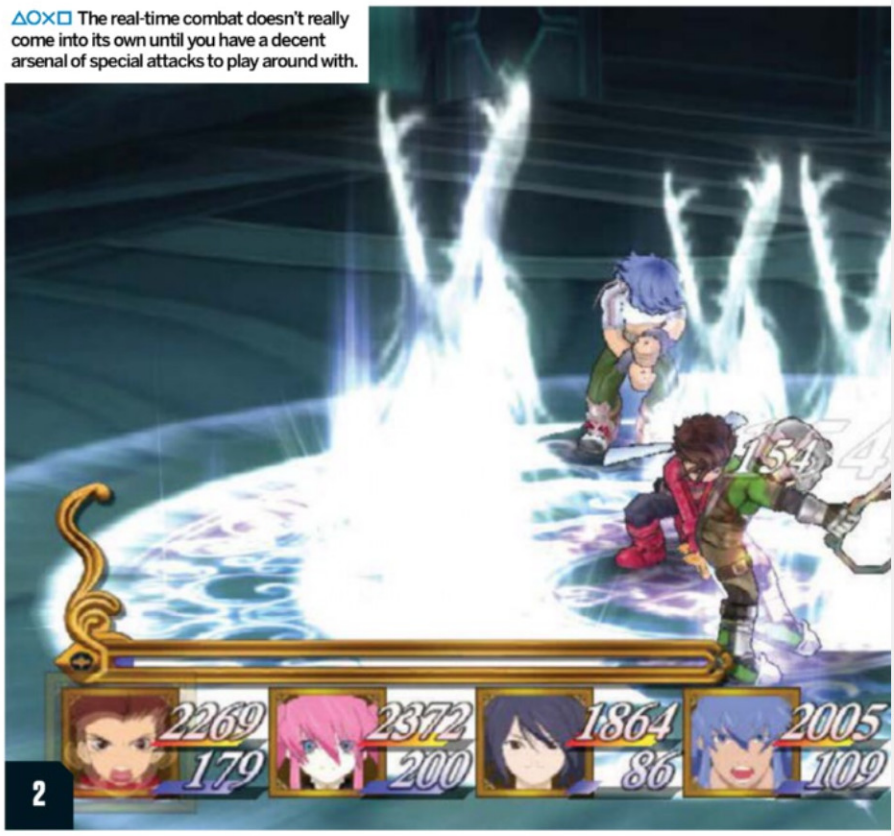
FOR FANS OF... △ **VIRTUE'S LAST REWARD** Another Vita visual novel about a bunch of people trapped and forced to coexist.

REVIEW ROUND-UP

THE HD REMAKES just keep on coming, and while we may love **RAYMAN LEGENDS [1]**, there are few games less in need of the next-gen treatment than this. The game already runs at 1080p, 60fps on PS3, so there's not even that visual leap that makes the likes of *Tomb Raider* and the PS4 cross-gen launch line-up so tempting. Aside from a few bonus levels and a pointless Ubisoft crossover costume, there's little reason to upgrade – ever-so-slightly improved visual fidelity and a free camera mode just aren't enough for anyone except the most dedicated to the platforming cause to even consider double-dipping, especially when the PS3 version is already available cheaper. It's an awesome game (Murfy aside) but 'having another PS4 game' is pretty much the only reason to get involved if the PS3 version is an option for you. And if it is, well, you should probably have listened to the gaming world when we pretty much unanimously told you the game was excellent last year. Still, three cheers for second chances on this first-rate platformer.

But while *Rayman*'s second chance reprises its former 1080p glory, **TALES OF SYMPHONIA CHRONICLES [2]** uses the term 'HD' in the loosest sense imaginable. Here, we have the original GameCube classic *Symphonia* and Wii sort-of-sequel *Dawn Of The New World*, both upscaled but with little done to them beyond that. As such, a level of detail that would once have impressed in standard definition instead screams out for clearer textures, better models and more fluid animation. They're still great games (as long as you don't mind the *Tales* series' somewhat basic real-time combat and can get over decade-old issues like ill-explained mechanics and unskippable everythings) but in a post-*Ni No Kuni* world, we fail to see how anyone could be impressed by this. The chance to replay these games is welcome, especially seeing as only the nine people who actually owned GameCubes would have had a chance to first time around. Just don't go in expecting anything close to the visual fidelity, user-friendly nature or mechanical depth of other more recent releases.

△○×□ The real-time combat doesn't really come into its own until you have a decent arsenal of special attacks to play around with.



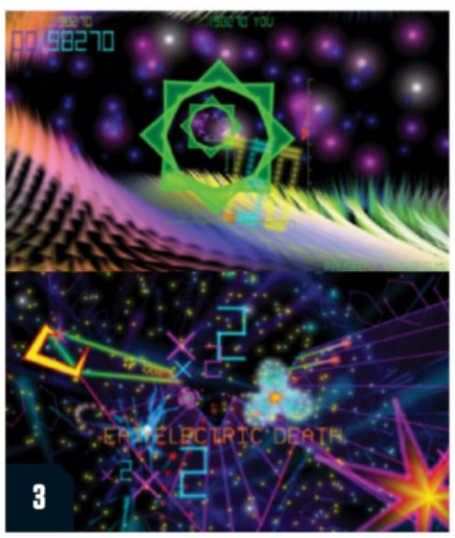
2

"THREE CHEERS FOR SECOND CHANCES ON A FIRST-RATE PLATFORMER"

The same can be said of **TXK [3]**, the difference being that in this case, it's not a negative. While indie developers have refused to let the score attack shooter die thanks to the efforts of Housemarque, Bizarre Creations (RIP) and a host of others, industry veteran Jeff Minter tends to offer a very different flavour of shooter to his peers. Previously, this has involved near intolerable levels of wacky humour and oddball antics but here, the *Tempest 2000* developer has stripped all of that back somewhat to create... well, a shinier, more intense version of *Tempest 2000* for Vita, basically. The fact that nobody else is doing tunnel shooters these days means

1

△○×□ Boss battles look a bit nicer due to higher poly counts on the giant enemies. They're still not especially tricky, mind...



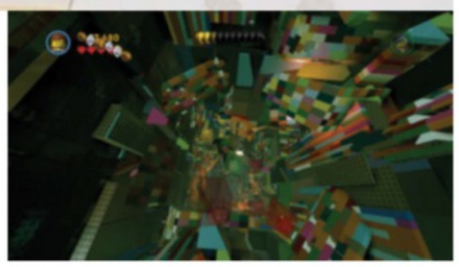
that even though retro-savvy gamers will instantly recognise the format, it works for everyone – the old-school crowd will love it because it's a new *Tempest* while newcomers can enjoy it as it feels completely unlike anything else to arrive in a good few years.

If you're in the mood for something a little less chaotic, you could do worse than **THE LEGO MOVIE VIDEOGAME [4]**, although it does feel like something of a step back from the all-encompassing awesomeness of *Lego Marvel*. Going from a fully explorable world to smaller themed hubs is a bit restrictive and generally, the game suffers from not having the usual massive cast of familiar characters – we've gone from unlocking Deadpool and Gandalf back to unlocking the likes of Clown and Construction Worker 2 as in the early days of the *Lego* games, and it's just a bit disappointing. Still, the mechanics are as tight as usual and it'll keep the kids busy for a few hours after seeing the movie, but it just doesn't have that usual fan service to help turn it from a decent game into a great one. Still, at least it isn't riddled with bugs like the final game on our rundown...

Do you see? It's a hilarious joke, because **EDF 2025 [5]** is all about killing legions of giant bugs. Daft, over the top and dripping with B-movie charm, it's one of the worst pieces of code we've encountered but impossible to hate all the same. Even though the action frequently slows to a crawl and the frame-rate drops into single figures in pretty much every level, the arcade shooter mechanics are strong enough and the ridiculous enemy forces

△○×□ Ladies and gents, we give you absolutely every colour ever in a single screenshot. You're welcome.

△○×□ This probably isn't the best time to celebrate...



plentiful enough to keep you coming back for more. Sure, it's pretty much a case of 'so bad, it's good' but so long as you're not locked into PS4 elitism and can slum it in what looks like a ropey old PS2 game, there are hours of bug-slaying, weapon-amassing silliness to be had here – random loot drops offer an incentive to return to old missions on higher difficulties, as do the four different classes and their varied play styles. It's also one of the few games in recent years to offer local co-op in addition to online, although given how unstable the game is in single-player, we'd recommend sticking to online multiplayer unless you're particularly fond of migraines.

A BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO...

FINAL FANTASY XIV

We've had a good six months with A Realm Reborn now, so with the PS4 version due any day (and a free beta open to all, so you can try before you buy), we decided to impart a little wisdom upon newcomers to the Eorzean way of life

CHOOSE A CLASS

Your first big decision happens mere minutes into booting up the game for the first time. No, not which hairstyle to rock... what profession line you should follow. This isn't a permanent decision – reaching level 10 will let you join all the other guilds in order to level additional classes – but since you'll be locked into it until then, just pick whichever you like the sound of most. Classes fall into three main categories – tanks, healers and DPS. Marauder and Gladiator are the two tanks, focusing on VIT to increase HP and pulling aggro to keep squishy party members safe. Tanks have a lot of responsibility dumped on them, so we'd advise MMO newcomers to either steer clear or be ready to put the time in to really learn the role.

Healing can be similarly taxing and with Conjurer the only pure healing class (Arcanist can heal to a degree, branching into a pure healer Scholar with the L30 Job split), there's not a lot to say. Macros are a healer's best friend, as targeting with a pad can be a nuisance – setting up one button for each of your party members will make for less stressful healing. The rest of the classes are damage-focused, so those are the easiest starting points as long as you can learn when to rein your barrage in so as not to pull aggro off the tank. They don't like it when you do.

Oh, and unless you have friends playing on a specific server, pick one for your territory where possible. It sounds obvious but you'll see a marked difference in latency – if it comes down to it, be prepared to create characters on multiple servers to see which works best for you, particularly during the free beta period.

JOIN A FREE COMPANY

While there are a fair few guilds that focus on end-game content and won't take noobs under their wings, there are just as many that welcome players of all levels. If you don't just pick up a random invite, ask people that you get on well with in instances or parties for Free Company invites, or put a shout out in any of the capital cities – be sure to let people know what you're looking for so they know if you're a good fit for their group. We've found our FCs to be extremely helpful, with many players happy to help lower level players through early dungeons, meld Materia, offer advice or craft gear and often without asking for a single Gil. Whatever it is you need, it's likely that other FC members will also want to do the same – either being similarly new to the game or when levelling alt classes – and it's by far the best way to guarantee decent groups for FATEs and dungeon instances.

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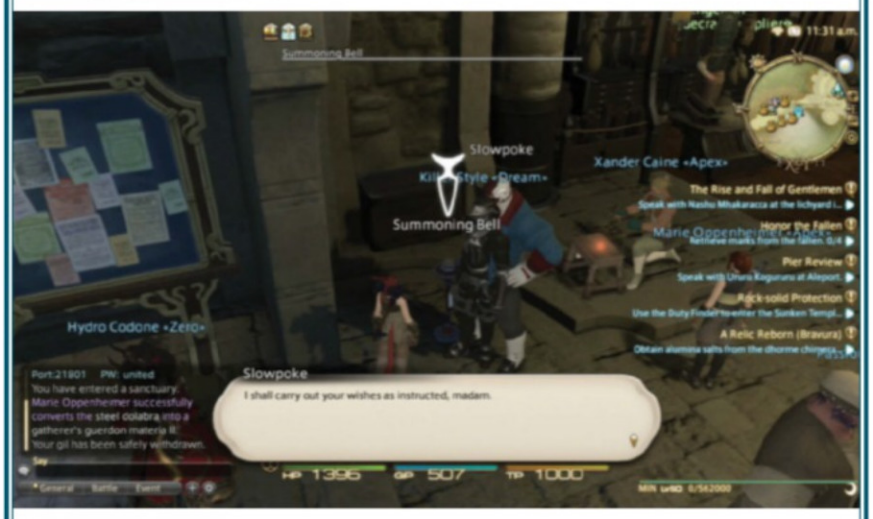
USE YOUR RETAINER



After completing the level 17 story quest Scions Of The Seventh Dawn, you'll unlock the ability to hire retainers to sell and store your gear. Once you finish this quest, head to the commercial district of any city (you know, where most of the shops are) and seek out the Retainer Vocate. After creating your retainer, you can load them up with loads of junk to store as well as up to 20 things to sell on the market board. Crafters are always after shards and materials, so these often sell well. Materia can also be a money-spinner, especially since you'll have no way of doing anything useful with it until later in the game. When listing an object, use the button in the top right to compare prices and set yours accordingly – factors like location and quantity can have a slight effect on sales potential but generally speaking, just undercutting the market is the quickest way to make a few Gil.

LEARN THE INSTANCES

Everyone's new to a dungeon at some point, so do your allies a favour and speak up if it's your first run – with the exception of end-game runs, most teams should be accommodating and be able to impart any need-to-know wisdom. It shouldn't take more than a couple of runs to get the mechanics down and while the early ones like Sastasha and Copperbell Mines are fairly simple, they're great for learning tricks like pulling mobs and dealing with gimmicks ready for the later ones. The loot is often decent too – all the more reason to head back into dungeons after the story has moved on. Primal battles are also worth repeating, if only so you've got a fair idea of what to expect from the end-game Hard and Extreme variants. You should always skip cut-scenes too, even if it's your first run. They can be watched later from the safety of your inn room without holding anyone up.

FOLLOW THE STORY

While you might be tempted to run off and explore, it makes far more sense to start by powering through the main story quests as best you can. This will unlock the airship for travel between cities, many of the dungeons, Grand Companies and later the ability to ride mounts. Airship is the big one as depending on where you start, you might find yourself without much to safely explore at lower levels – you should be able to start the related quest from around level 14 and will shortly after be able to jet off to other cities and pick up any other classes you might want to level on the side. If you're struggling with any of the story dungeons to make it through to the Grand Company selection, make sure you're at or above the max level for the instance (this can be found in the Duty Finder details) and if needs be, put out a call to arms to your FC buddies and hope somebody is around to help!

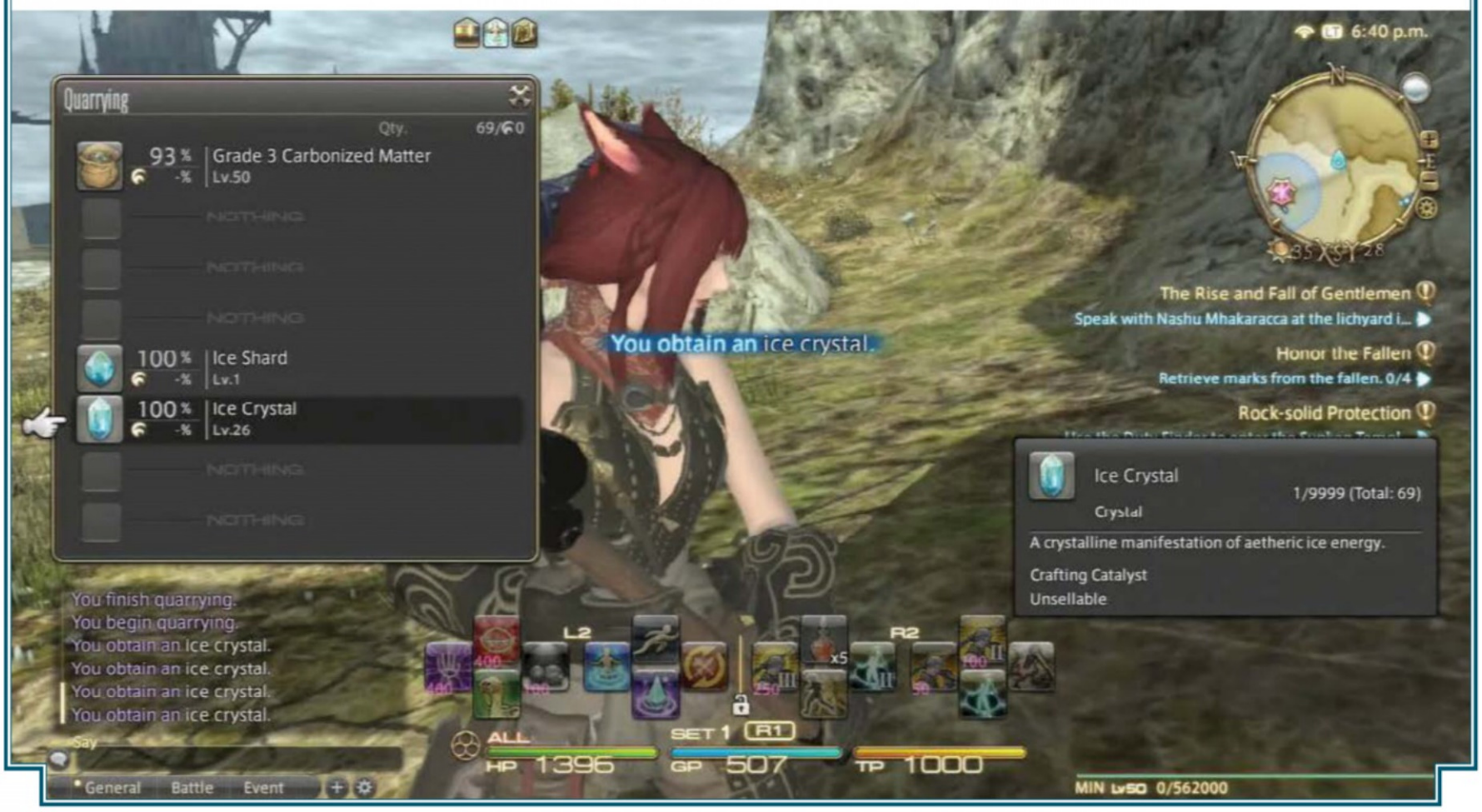
UNLOCK YOUR JOB

Class quests unlock in the relevant guild every five levels, but once you hit level 30 you'll be able to take your class even further. To do so, you'll also need to reach level 15 in a secondary class determined by the Job you're going for – more will likely be added in later updates but for now, each class (with the exception of Arcanist) can only progress to one Job. Check out this table – to unlock a Job quest, you need to be level 30 in the listed main class and level 15 in the sub class. While Jobs have a few of their own skills that unlock every five levels via quests, they still use most of the abilities of the main class they are derived from. You'll also be able to use cross-class skills from the sub and extra class categories – after taking Pugilist to level 8, for instance, a Warrior could use the Second Wind ability for additional healing. Once unlocked, there's no reason not to use your Job rather than basic class – they're better in pretty much every way.

JOB	MAIN	SUB	EXTRA
Warrior	Marauder	Gladiator	Pugilist
Paladin	**Gladiator**	**Conjurer**	**Marauder**
Monk	Pugilist	Lancer	Marauder
Dragoon	**Lancer**	**Marauder**	**Pugilist**
Bard	Archer	Pugilist	Lancer
White Mage	**Conjurer**	**Arcanist**	**Thaumaturge**
Black Mage	Thaumaturge	Archer	Arcanist
Summoner	**Arcanist**	**Thaumaturge**	**Archer**
Scholar	Arcanist	Conjurer	Thaumaturge

LEVEL GATHERING/CRAFTING

While gathering is a grind, we actually found crafting to be fun in the end, even if you do need to level pretty much all of the crafting classes for the skills needed to consistently make high quality items. Completing log records isn't the only speedy way to advance in these passive professions, either. Levequests are amazing for experience (if you have the allowances) and crafting ones offer a *huge* bonus for HQ items – you can even cheat the system by submitting bought items, plus some missions allow you to trade multiple items in succession so find and abuse these. You could also pick up the scrolls from the Grand Company vendor once you join up. These offer 50 per cent bonus experience for up to three hours, which can be hugely helpful if you're just grinding away for a while.



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DO YOUR DAILY QUESTS

Dailies are a relatively new feature but they're a great way of farming a little extra experience and resources and don't take long to get through. So once you unlock them, get into the habit of getting them out of the way early and often. Beast Tribe quests can be picked up from near Little Ala Mhigo and The Hawthorne Hut once activated, with vendors and rewards improving as you grow your loyalty by completing quests. There's also Duty Roulette to consider, since the first random dungeon run you complete using this queue each day grants significantly improved rewards.

GET TO LEVEL 50

Life begins at 50 in Eorzea – that's when all the fun end-game content really starts to kick off and the best gear starts to appear. As such, taking your main class to the cap should obviously be pretty high on your priority list. FATE grinding is still a popular way of doing this and there are always parties hiring, plus Square recently tinkered with dungeon experience to make instances the better way to level up – the ability to pick up loot along the way certainly doesn't hurt, either. Bonus XP from Free Company actions (if your FC is big enough) and from food buffs are welcome as well, as is the 'rested' bonus – always be sure to quit the game when in a sanctuary (with the little moon icon down by the XP bar) and when you come back, you'll have a limited amount of bonus XP to work with based on how long you've been away. Even when you're not playing, you're still levelling! Well, sort of...

PLAY PLUS

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INTERVIEW

NOT JUST ANOTHER BUG HUNT

Alien: Isolation's design lead, Clive Lindop, talks us through the challenges of doing justice to a survival-horror icon

Why has it taken this long to do a game based on the first film, compared to the endless shooters that have taken inspiration from the second?

Well, it's funny, it's not until you start making one that you realise why [laughs]. The most basic answer is that having a pulse rifle, or a machine gun, or heavy weaponry and shooting lots of aliens in swarms is very different to building an effective, intelligent hunting Alien that's completely dynamic.

When you first start thinking about it you go, 'well, if we script the hell out of it and make it very cinematic we'll have lots of control over the timing, lots of jump scares and it'll work'. But we made a very specific decision that what we wanted was *the* Alien, not *an* Alien. And the qualities that the Alien has are that he is a believable, dangerous hunter. In most games, the AI needs to be on-screen for about 15 seconds. They spawn, they run around, take cover, takes some shots at you, die and then more of them appear. Our Alien has to be in the environment, hunting you, maneuvering through multiple layers of space for anything from ten, to 20, to 30 minutes at a time, and still be as dangerous to you at the end of that experience as he was at the start. That's quite a lot of work, and that's probably why it's not been done before.

It was quite hard to see what the Alien was doing in the dark, but can you tell me the sort of things it'll react to, the patterns it'll follow and how it will hunt you?

The AI operates on three fundamental principles: he searches the area based on what he sees and hears, he tries to zero-in on your position and start hunting you, then he'll make a decision about when to hit you. So, you have to keep in mind where he is and what direction he's moving in and what you're giving away about yourself, because in any

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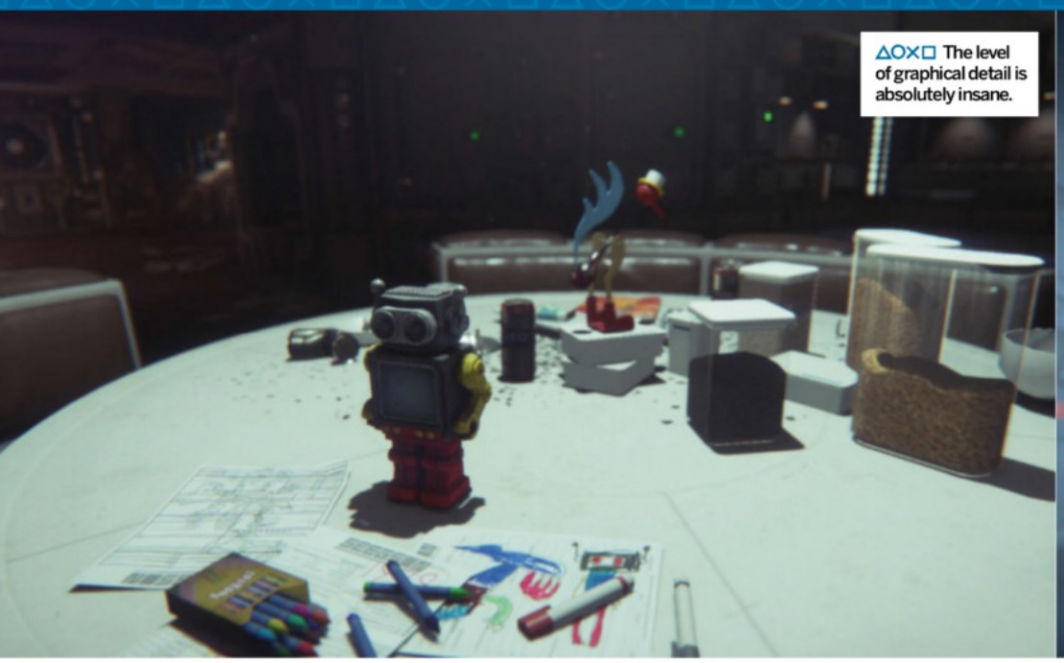


△○×□ The level of graphical detail is absolutely insane.

one moment he's based entirely on what he's seeing and sensing.

And that has secondary results as well. Say you were crouching and you opened a locker door. He might not see you, but he could see the door open. He'll come over and think, 'why did that door open?' If he sees you get in it, he'll rip the door off and grab you. But if he just sees the door open he will be suspicious and he'll come and investigate. We're constantly balancing the game's difficulty; we never want him to feel like he's giving you a break or that he's forgiving in any way. But where the player's edge is that as the game progresses, you get better at moving through the environment and understanding what sort of things are going to give you away.

The environment's very sterile, which is fine for a two-hour film – but how do you keep that interesting over 12 hours?

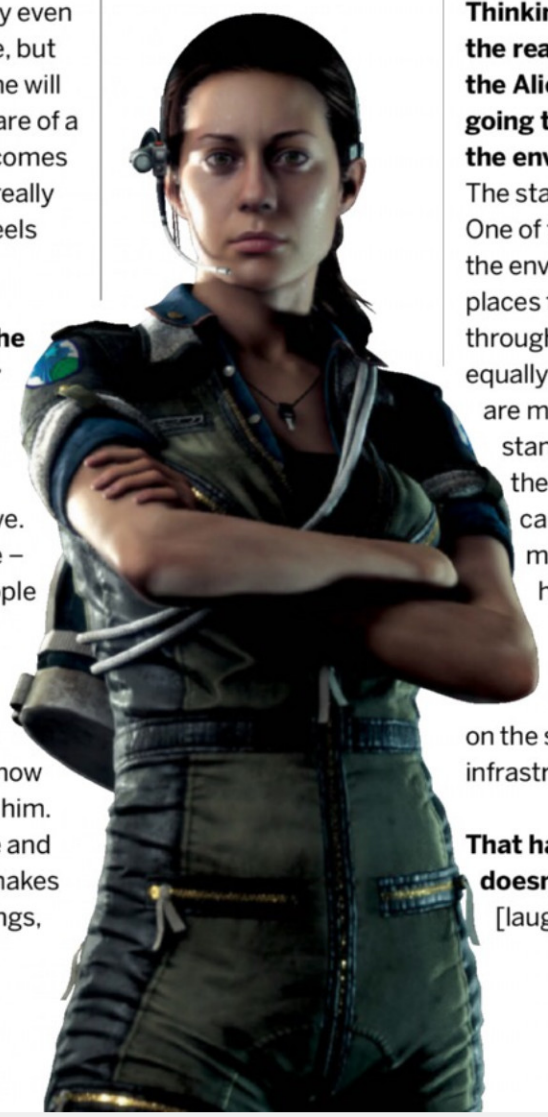
One of the things about the environments is they keep the player off-balance. Just as I'm becoming familiar with how this section of the world operates, I transition to something else. Habitation areas or hospitals will look different to the industrial section. So you're always having to learn new things about the environment. The worst thing that can happen is that a player becomes over-familiar with a space.

One of the cool features of the Alien along with that evolving environment is that as the player finds and builds new items and tools to use against the Alien, they won't always work. They may work the first time, you may even get away with it the second time, but try something a third time and he will have adapted. So, once he's aware of a certain trick you're using he becomes aware of what it means. That's really important so the player never feels like they've mastered him.

Will Ripley be trapped alone the whole time, or are there other people who can help her?

As with Ripley in the original films, you'll often find yourself on your own and trying to survive. But you're going to meet people – there's an ensemble cast of people that you're with. And one of the cool things is that humans are often less reliable in their behaviour than the Alien is. The Alien is pure of purpose – you know what you're in for when you see him. His purpose in life is unalterable and non-negotiable, which is what makes him frightening. But human beings, in extreme situations, sometimes you'll find the best of them and they'll help you, and other times you'll meet people and their very worst sides will come out. Not ruining any surprises, but you will come across humans and not all of them will be your friends.

△○×□ This massive bastard will be stalking you all across the ship. Dynamic encounters mean meetings will rarely be scripted.



Thinking back to the second film, the real threat there almost isn't the Aliens, but the reactor that's going to explode. What hazards will the environment present?

The station has some issues [laughs]. One of the key characteristics of the environment is that it offers you places to hide, darkness to move through, multiple routes. But it equally represents a danger. Our eyes are motion based, so if the Alien stands still and disappears from the motion tracker, people really can't pick him out. Suddenly he'll move and they're like, 'oh, f***, he's there!', so the environment offers dangers and ways of survival. And there are other entities beyond human beings on the station that form part of its infrastructure that make it dangerous.

That has to be robots, synthetics, doesn't it?

[laughs] Who knows what it will be?

EXTENDED PLAY

GRAND THEFT AUTO V

No game has managed to match the scope and spectacle of GTA V. Even after hours and hours in Los Santos, there's still a crazy amount of nonsense to get involved with...

BOUNTY HUNTING (FREEFORM)

■ **GAMERS HAVE BECOME** so accustomed to rigid rules, objectives and goals that sometimes it's good to remember that you can play however you want. Watch a kid play *GTA V* (not a *really* young kid... you know what we mean) and they're not going to follow the story in single-player or meticulously rank up online. They're going to muck about. So why shouldn't we? Try taking on a role – be a bounty hunter for a whole session online and concentrate all your efforts on taking down other players with bounties on their heads. It'll lead to all sorts of unscripted brilliance and no two sessions will ever play out the same way. Will it earn you megabucks? No. But who cares when you're having this much fun?

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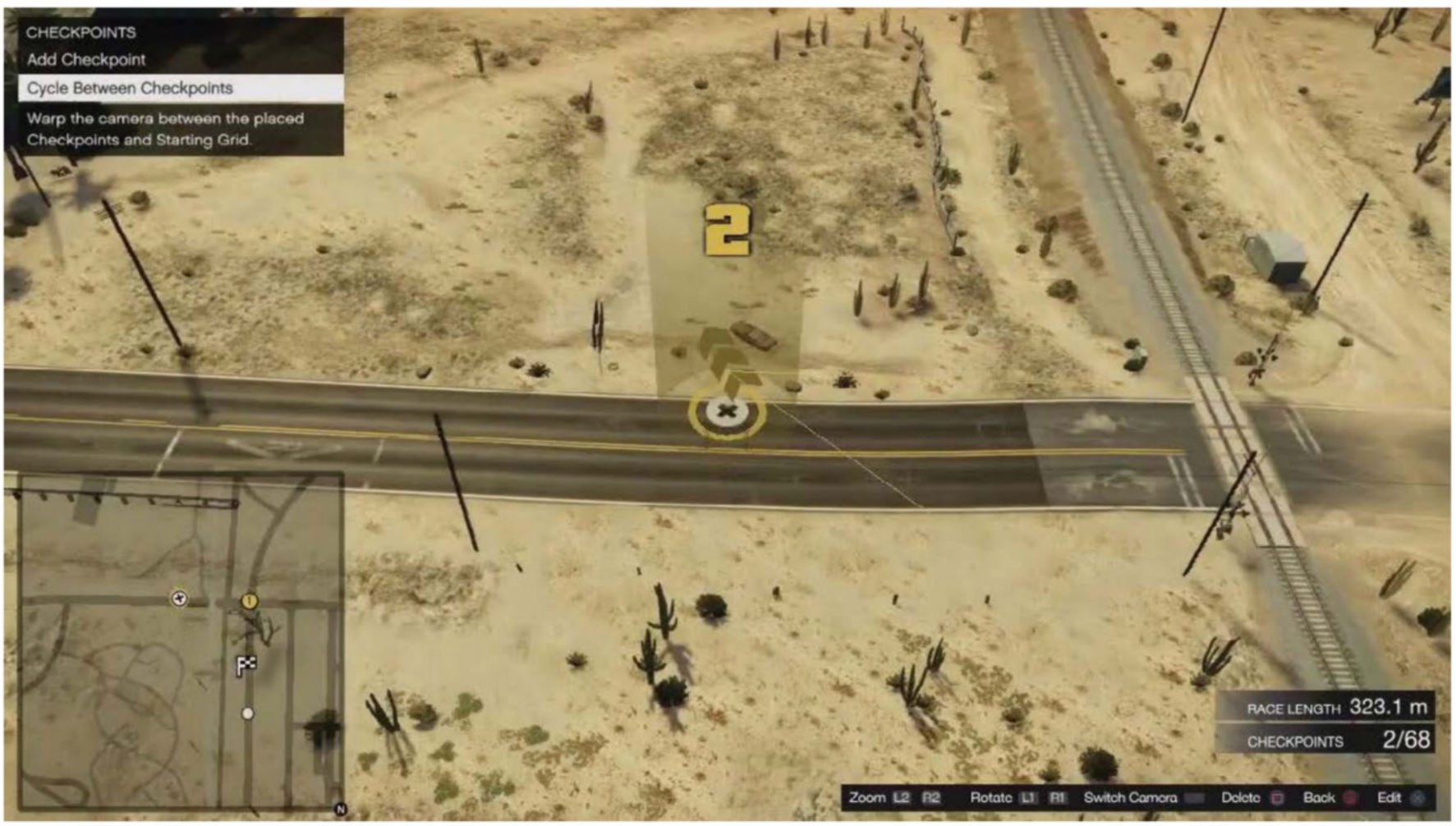
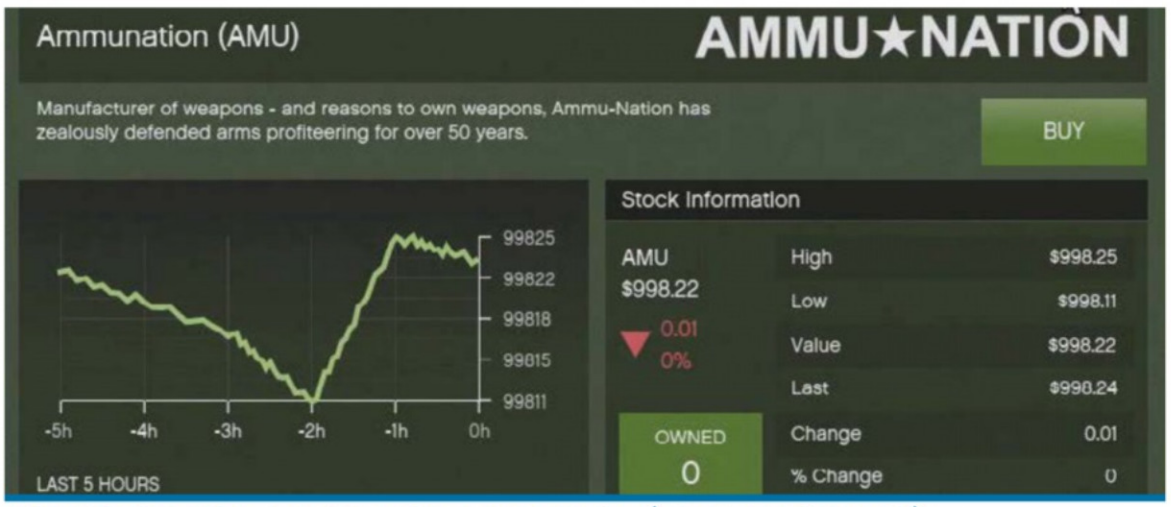


MISSION CREATOR (DLC)

■ **THE FIRST PROPER** DLC drop came in the form of a *GTA Online* mission creator, allowing budding creatives types to construct their own online playgrounds. It's a very simple tool if you have the patience; drag and drop obstacles in a chosen area of the map, select rules and game types, then test it out before uploading it to the server. The most popular missions can eventually make it into the proper mission rotation thanks to Rockstar's continued support, granting both the community with endless ways to play, and the gratification for creators in seeing their work played by millions. Most people will either create weak deathmatch arenas or bland racetracks, but given *GTA V*'s immense player base, it shouldn't come as a huge shock to discover that some have managed to completely flip the way the game plays and truly opened up the concept of sandbox. Just scrolling through player-created missions has left us playing car chases with cars themselves being used as weapons, *Bad Boys II* style, we've seen *Destruction Derby* crashtaculars taking place in mid-air, and even a brawl inside a steel cage. The mission creator does hamstring players slightly by forcing gametypes and rulesets (it's not quite as freeform as some would like, probably due to the constraints of the engine) but Rockstar is constantly updating and improving the service. With good reason too – why create DLC in-house when the community will happily do it for free? The dream scenario for *GTA V*'s final form would see a *LittleBigPlanet*-style universe of truly open-ended game types, with instant access and matchmaking. As it is, it's not far off. Time to get creative.



STOCKS AND SHARES (OPTIONS)

■ **ADMITTEDLY, THIS ISN'T** all it could have been. The promise of a fully functioning stock market in Los Santos is delivered upon in *GTA V*, but it does lack the malleability some would have loved. Put it this way, you're not going to be the new Jordan Belfort. Still, there is money to be made on the stock market, mainly when you have some capital to your name. Listen out for radio cues about companies in the city and spend wisely – they won't fluctuate as much as during Franklin's assassination missions, but you can make some tidy money if you invest big at the right times. On top of that, you can force things along a little. Try smashing up a business and investing in its rival. There are no rules in the money game. Time to invest in a pinstripe suit...

FREE AIM (OPTIONS)

■ **THE SAVVY FOLKS** out there already know about this, but when a game sells over 20 million copies, you have to expect that most people just play it as it is and don't go fiddling about in the options. And if you're one of them, then you won't have played *GTA V* right. Head to the options and turn your aiming mode to 'free aim'. It'll halt all that auto-aiming, camera-snapping horror and get you playing properly. Shootouts become tense and thrilling because you need to actually use skill, thought and positioning to take out the enemy rather than just jamming the aim button. Don't be soft – Trevor wouldn't stand for it.

TROPHY GUIDE

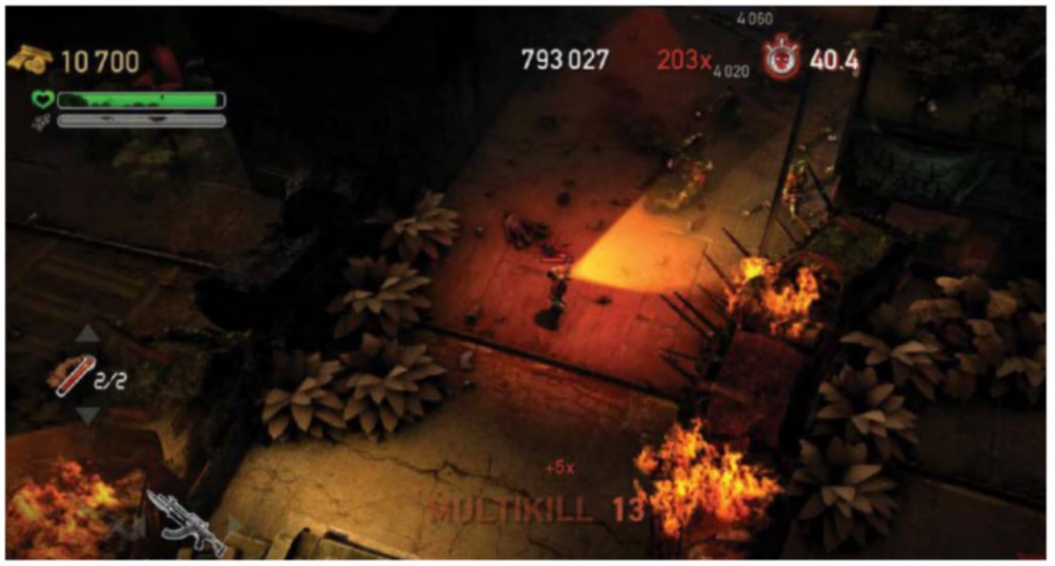
YOUR NEXT PS PLUS PLATINUMS

Once again the rumours proved to be true and though it's not exactly the most exciting line-up in PlayStation Plus history, it's still a solid enough set of freebies to get you through any downtime you might find between the big games like Dark Souls II, South Park and Ground Zeroes. Better yet, why not turn this little lot into a couple of shiny new Platinums before a better selection rolls around next month?

DEAD NATION: APOCALYPSE EDITION

PLATFORM: PS4 **DIFFICULTY:** 4/5 **TROPHIES:** 41 1 6 10 24

■ **SINCE DIFFICULTY LEVELS** unlock in sequence, you'll want to start the game on Grim – it's a hard slog but it'll take twice as long to unlock Morbid and Undead modes if you don't. Trophies for cumulative kill counts and weapon usage should pop over time as there are quite a lot of zombies to kill (you might have noticed) but loot-based challenges are better worried about later. On higher difficulties, zombies are more plentiful so stray shots and frenzied undead are likely to destroy cars before you can raid their trunks. This would never do. A careful Braindead run is the easiest way to work towards 'Top Gear' and 'King Of Looters' – raid every car and glowing chest, search every alley and never go through a one-way gate unless you're confident that you've rinsed the area. Trophies related to the new Arcade and Endless modes are even tougher, but 'Keep It Up' and 'Combo Master' can both be unlocked at once in Endless. Take the score route on any wave after the fourth and let the Mouths live – they'll spawn even more enemies, making it easy to SMG your way through the pack for huge kill rate and multiplier bonuses.



TOMB RAIDER

PLATFORM: PS3 **DIFFICULTY:** 2/5 **TROPHIES:** 51 1 2 7 41

■ **THIS REBOOT'S TROPHY** list is hardly the most exciting or taxing you'll encounter, but it's made more of a grind by the multiplayer Trophies. Online play is actually surprisingly good fun but still, getting to level 60 and unlocking everything will take time more than skill, so be ready for that. In terms of solo stuff, it's the secret ones and missables you need to look out for – 'Crab Cakes' will pop when you kill a single crab in Shipwreck Shore, while 'Chatterbox' requires you to speak with every ally at every opportunity, so be ready to sit through some nonsense. There are a couple of Trophies relating to enemy dynamite, one for killing two guys by disarming someone mid-throw (go for a limb shot) and another for shooting dynamite out of mid-air. Several others, such as 'Deadeye', can only be done in particular areas, in this instance the bit in the industrial area later on with lots of ziplining enemies. Other than that, just rack up kills with each weapon and be sure to track down all collectibles (there are maps for these, although Challenges will require the use of Survival vision) and plug away at multiplayer – you'll have your Platinum before you know it.

PIXELJUNK MONSTERS ULTIMATE HD

PLATFORM: VITA **DIFFICULTY:** 3/5
TROPHIES: 21 21

■ **NO PLATINUM HERE** and it's no *Brothers* in terms of list creativity either – this one is actually pretty boring, but then it *is* a tower defence game. They're all Bronzes too, so anyone looking for maximum Trophy level boosting for minimal effort probably shouldn't bother. If you are planning on racking up a few more Bronzes, though, or just proving your mastery over this decidedly average game, it's worth noting that you can get 100 per cent completion without ever leaving Casual difficulty. This will naturally make all medals and Trophies that much easier to get. 'Perfect Partners' requires five perfect levels in co-op, but you might find that incompetent allies and lag prevent you from getting it easily. Grab someone else who has got the game free on PS Plus and do it locally if you can.

BROTHERS: A TALE OF TWO SONS

PLATFORM: PS3 **DIFFICULTY:** 1/5 **TROPHIES:** 12 1 4 7

■ **AGAIN NO PLATINUM**, but at least it's an interesting list. Not a single one of the 12 Trophies is tied into story progress (probably just as well, considering the main game is about nine seconds long), instead rewarding exploration and experimentation outside of the narrative. As such, each will likely take a little deduction, although all can be picked up via Chapter Select after finishing the game should you miss anything. Both 'Black Sheep' and 'Bunny Buddies' are achieved in the same way – take the relevant animal to the campfire in the first chapter to blacken them with soot. The first part of the 'Love Birds' Trophy is nearby (release the bird from its cage with the younger brother), with the second occurring in the inventor's workshop in chapter four – use the telescope to spot a bird and if you watch long enough, the one you freed will join it for the game's only Gold Trophy. Most others can be picked up just by interacting with everything, although you could easily miss 'Falling Star' – have the younger brother interact with the statues surrounded by candles in chapter three and hold the button until the shooting star goes by.

SMART AS...

PLATFORM: VITA **DIFFICULTY:** 2/5
TROPHIES: 29 1 6 10 12

■ **BRAIN TRAINING WAS** kind of a big deal on DS despite offering less of a mental workout than an episode of *Countdown*. *Brain Training* with a Platinum, though? Now you're talking. Once again, it's a dull old list and the only thing we can really offer in terms of advice is to play every day if you can. 100 days for 'Perfect Attendance' is quite the commitment, although you can cheat this and several other of the repetition-based Trophies by simply playing once, going back to the main menu, exiting out to the Vita menu, moving the date forward by one day and reloading the game. Aside from that, it's merely a case of playing enough to unlock Genius difficulty – so either three stars on Hard or playing on Hard five times – then playing each of the games on Genius. Feel smarter now? No, didn't think so.

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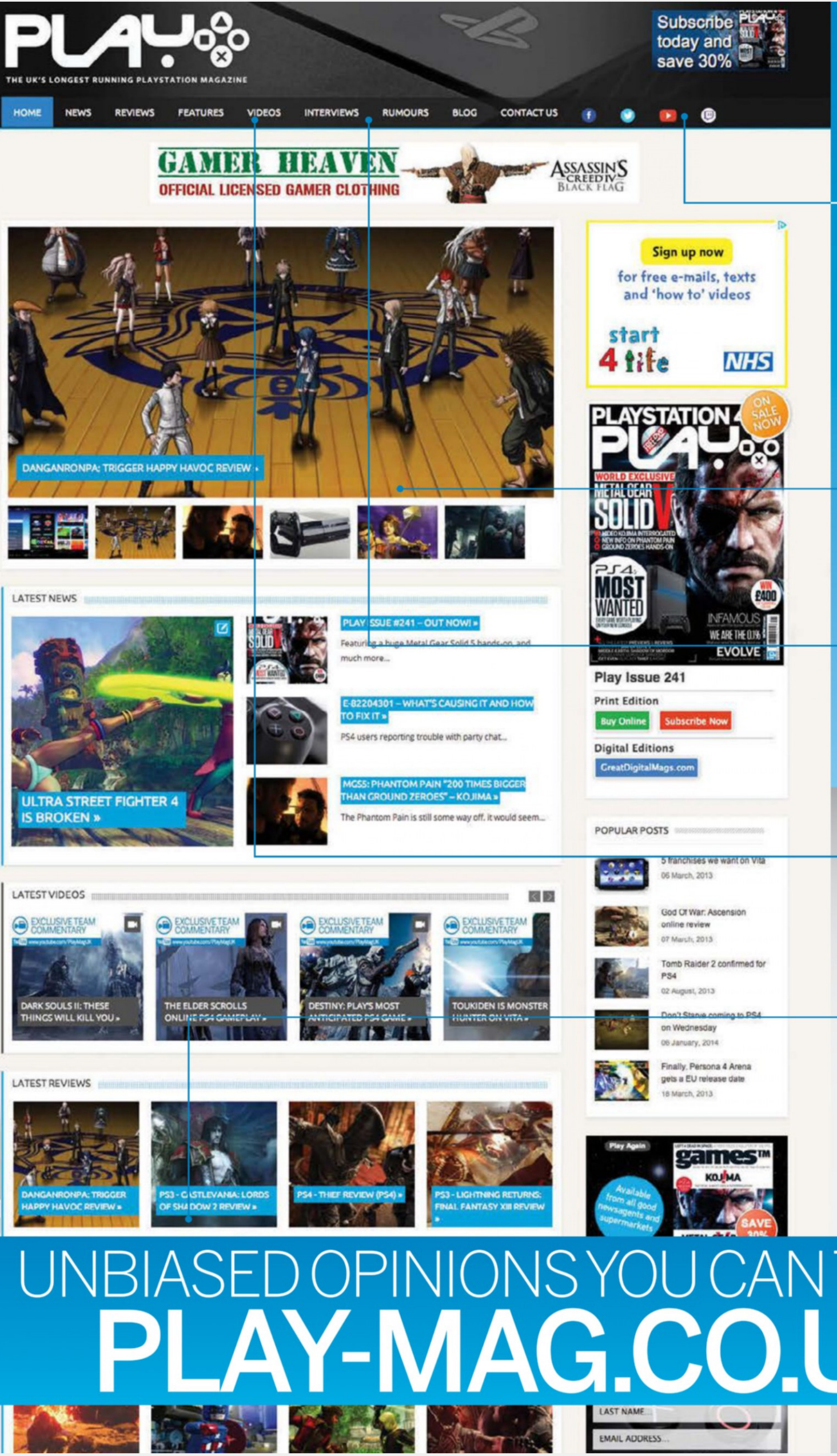

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■ The top strap is your gateway to each section of the site. It's pretty self-explanatory, from reviews and features through to exclusive previews and PlayStation rumours.

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■ Scrolling down will give you a look at the top stories in each section; a brief overview of everything that is going on in the world of PlayStation. We update this every day.

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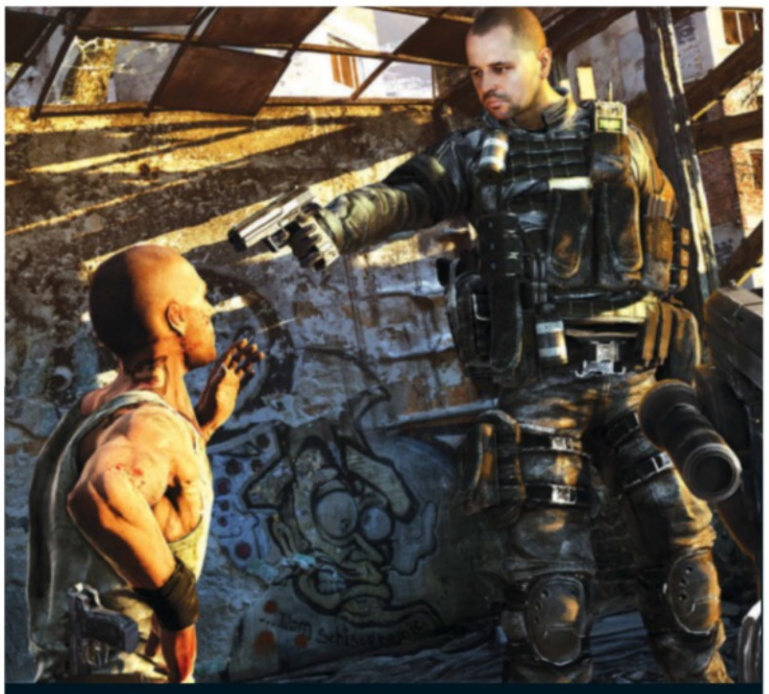
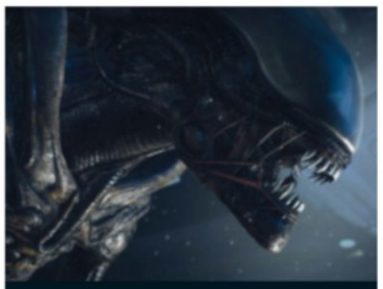


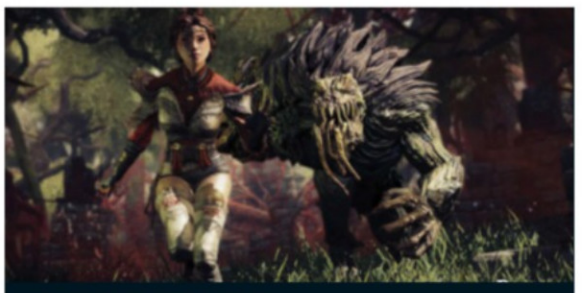
GET EVEN
ONE OF THE PRETTIEST GAMES ON PS4



ALIEN: ISOLATION
RUN AWAY

DEEP DOWN
FREE-TO-PLAY DRAGON'S DOGMA? SOLD

DRIVECLUB
ONE DAY, MAYBE...



BOUND BY FLAME
LIKE SKYRIM, BUT NO-ONE'S HEARD OF IT

FINAL FANTASY XV
THE FRANCHISE'S PS4 DEBUT DRAWS CLOSER

GUILTY GEAR XRD –SIGN–
HEAVEN OR HELL? LET'S ROCK

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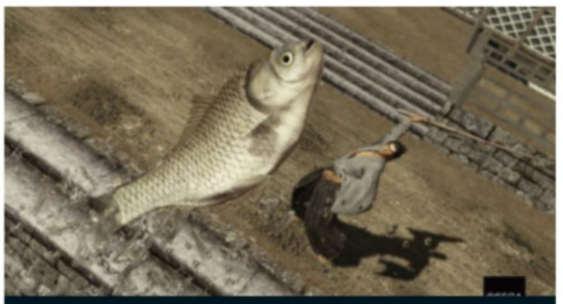
TOURNAMENTS!

Over the coming months we plan on running a series of tournaments over various games, with prizes for the best players. These prizes will probably be games, but may also take the forms of t-shirts, books or whatever other assorted tat we have lying around. Make sure you keep an eye on our Twitter, Facebook and Twitch channels for your own chance to join in the fun and maybe even win!



JAPANESE STUFF

Now that the PS4 has launched in Japan, the Japanese PSN store is live, and with it comes a bunch of demos and free-to-play games that we don't understand. We aren't going to let that stop us though, so if you like watching people grow steadily more confused and angry as they play weird shit, enjoy!

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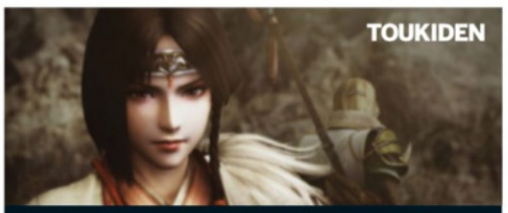
DESTINY

IT'S OUR MOST anticipated game, and we've got plenty to say about it. This is probably the most enthusiastic you'll ever hear us, actually.

TOUKIDEN

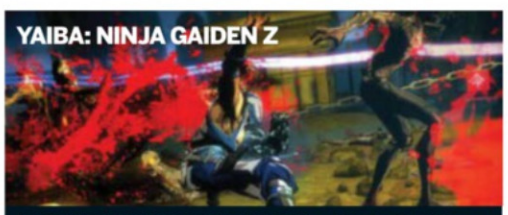


WANT TO PLAY *Monster Hunter* on your Vita? Let us tell you why *Toukiden* might be your best bet so far.

THE DIVISION

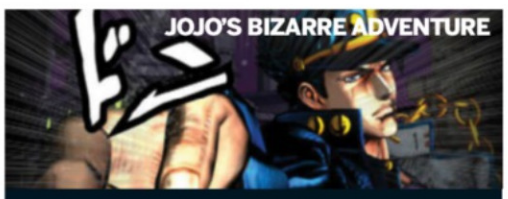
IT'S STILL A ways off, but it's hard not to be excited for Ubisoft's online shooter. Could this be the best *Tom Clancy* game yet?

YAIBA: NINJA GAIDEN Z



IT'S NOT NECESSARILY the *Ninja Gaiden* we want, but is it the *Ninja Gaiden* we need? The **Play** team is here with the answer.

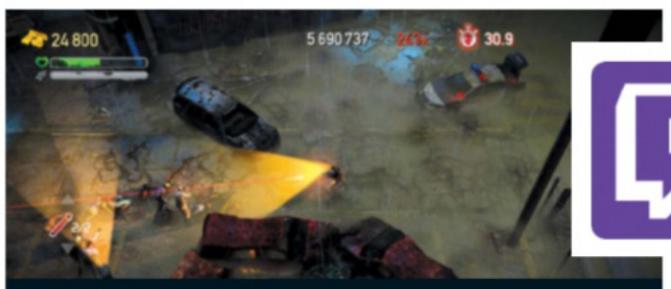
JOJO'S BIZARRE ADVENTURE



WE ARE THE only people in the industry who have actually read all of *JJBA* – fact. Let us explain exactly what it is.

KINGDOM COME: DELIVERANCE

A FANTASY RPG without the fantasy? Yep, *Kingdom Come* is set in real history, so no elves, dwarves or magic. Funny how removing something actually makes for a more interesting premise.



DEAD NATION

Our PS Plus game of the month is *Dead Nation*, the awesome top-down zombie shooter from Housemarque, the team also responsible for *Resogun*. Let the expert **Play** team give you some tips on how to best survive yet another zombie apocalypse.

FINAL FANTASY XIV: A REALM REBORN

We're big *Final Fantasy XIV* fans here on Play, so any chance we get to play a little more is alright with us. Come join in and take a look at the world of Eorzea through our eyes. Hopefully you'll like what you see – the game always needs more players!

SHARING

PS4: THE COMPLETE MANUAL

If a monthly dose of **Play** isn't enough, check out Imagine Publishing's new bookazine, **PS4 The Complete Manual**. It's a guide to your new console, from basic stuff I through to advanced tips, along with a verdict on every game available. Pick it up for only £7.99 in any good mag retailer, or order one on **greatdigitalmags.com**.

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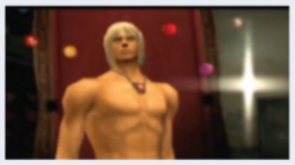
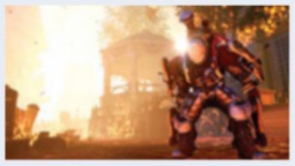


top five
LUKE ALBIGÉS

1. Devil May Cry 3: Dante's Awakening
2. Soul Blade
3. Dead Space 2
4. Metal Gear Rising: Revengeance
5. Final Fantasy VIII

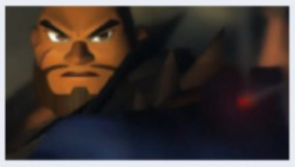
top five
LIAM WARR

1. Saints Row: The Third
2. Max Payne
3. The Last Of Us
4. MGS2: Sons Of Liberty
5. Battlefield 4



top five
STEVE HOLMES

1. 1. BioShock Infinite
2. 2. MGS2: Sons Of Liberty
3. 3. The Last Of Us
4. 4. BioShock
5. 5. Metal Gear Rising: Revengeance



top five
SAM SMITH

1. Final Fantasy VII
2. BioShock Infinite
3. The Last Of Us
4. Metal Gear Rising: Revengeance
5. Resident Evil

PS4 LISTING

GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
Assassin's Creed IV: Black Flag	237	83%
Battlefield 4	**238**	**80%**
Call Of Duty: Ghosts	238	75%
Don't Starve	**240**	**81%**
Killzone Shadow Fall	238	80%
Knack	**238**	**55%**
Lego Marvel Super Heroes	238	85%
Need For Speed Rivals	**238**	**83%**
Resogun	**238**	**91%**

An addictive and accomplished shoot-'em-up, *Resogun* is an indie delight and a surprise PS4 launch highlight. Awesome stuff.

Skylanders Swap Force	238	77%
Thief	**241**	**70%**
Tiny Brains	240	68%
War Thunder	**239**	**80%**

PS3 LISTING

007 Legends	225	44%
1942: Joint Strike	**170**	**74%**
3-On-3 NHL Arcade	177	62%
3D Dot Game Heroes	**192**	**87%**
50 Cent: Blood On The Sand	177	70%
Ace Combat: Assault Horizon	**211**	**78%**
The Adventures Of Tintin	212	58%
Afro Samurai	**177**	**61%**
After Burner Climax	**193**	**91%**
Agarest: Generations Of War	187	78%
Agarest: Generations Of War 2	**223**	**43%**
Agarest: Generations Of War Zero	209	52%
Age of Booty	**172**	**81%**
Air Conflicts: Secret Wars	208	58%
Alice: Madness Returns	**207**	**57%**
Alien Breed: Impact	196	80%
Alien Breed 2: Assualt	**201**	**82%**
Alien Breed 3: Descent	204	61%
Aliens: Colonial Marines	**230**	**45%**
Aliens Vs Predator	189	79%
All Zombies Must Die!	**214**	**64%**
Alone In The Dark	173	70%
Alpha Protocol	**193**	**83%**
Amy	215	19%
Anarchy: Rush Hour	**194**	**73%**
Ape Escape	208	55%
Aquapazza: Aquaplus Dream Match	**239**	**70%**
Aqua Panic	193	68%
Arcana Heart 3	**207**	**79%**
Armageddon Riders	207	65%
Armored Core: For Answer	**173**	**65%**
Armored Core 4	153	67%
Armored Core V	**217**	**60%**
Army Of Two	164	80%
Army Of Two: The 40th Day	**188**	**65%**
Army Of Two: The Devil's Cartel	231	44%
Ar Tonelico Qoga: Knell Of Ar Ciel	**203**	**27%**
Assassin's Creed	161	58%
Assassin's Creed II	**186**	**89%**
Assassin's Creed III	225	78%
Assassin's Creed: Brotherhood	**199**	**91%**
Assassin's Creed: Revelations	212	75%
Asura's Wrath	**216**	**67%**
Atelier Ayesha: The Alchemist Of Dust	230	60%
Atelier Rorona: The Alchemist Of Arland	**198**	**77%**
Backbreaker	193	70%
Back To The Future: It's About Time	**204**	**71%**
The Baconing	210	72%
Band Hero	**187**	**68%**
Batman: Arkham Asylum	183	85%
Batman: Arkham City	**211**	**94%**
Batman: Arkham Origins	**237**	**85%**
Battle Fantasia	176	67%
Battlefield 1943	**182**	**89%**
Battlefield: Bad Company	168	78%
Battlefield: Bad Company 2	**190**	**93%**
Battlefield 3	212	88%
Battleship	**219**	**44%**
Bayonetta*	**187**	**93%**
The Beatles: Rock Band	**184**	**96%**
Beat Hazard Ultra	213	79%
Beat Skecther	**201**	**85%**
Beowulf	161	61%
Beyond Good & Evil HD	**207**	**86%**
Beyond: Two Souls	236	70%
Binary Domain	**216**	**70%**
Bionic Commando	179	82%
Bionic Commando Rearmed	**169**	**88%**
Bionic Commando Rearmed 2	203	61%
BioShock	**172**	**93%**
BioShock 2	**189**	**88%**
BioShock Infinite	**230**	**97%**
Birds Of Steel	**217**	**55%**
BlackSite	163	43%
Blacklight: Tango Down	**200**	**64%**
Blade Kitten	197	72%
Bladestorm: The Hundred Years' War	**160**	**58%**
Blast Factor	152	72%
BlazBlue: Calamity Trigger	**190**	**85%**
BlazBlue: Continuum Shift	**198**	**94%**
Blazing Angels	151	54%
Bleach: Soul Resurrección	**209**	**63%**
Blitz: The League II	172	67%
Blokus	**202**	**54%**
BloodRayne: Betrayal	211	62%
Blue Toad Murder Files: The Mysteries Of Little Riddle Episode 1	**188**	**65%**
Blur	193	86%
Bodycount	**210**	**54%**
Bomberman Ultra	185	82%
Borderlands	**185**	**80%**
Borderlands 2	**223**	**90%**

Borderlands 2 is an excellent lesson in sequel-making and is easily one of 2012's best games.

The Bourne Conspiracy	168	72%
Braid	**188**	**93%**
Brink	206	67%
Brother: A Tale Of Two Sons	**233**	**83%**
Brothers In Arms: Hell's Highway	171	75%
Brütal Legend	**185**	**79%**
Bulletstorm	203	86%
The Bureau: XCOM Declassified	**235**	**57%**
Burnout Crash	211	79%
Burnout Paradise	**162**	**74%**
Burn Zombie Burn	178	85%
Buzz! Quiz TV	**168**	**82%**
Buzz! Quiz World	185	70%
Calling All Cars	155	81%
Call Of Duty 3	**151**	**77%**
Call Of Duty: World At War	173	68%
Call Of Duty 4: Modern Warfare	**160**	**88%**
Call Of Duty: Modern Warfare 2	**186**	**94%**
Call Of Duty: Modern Warfare 3	212	88%
Call Of Duty: Black Ops	**199**	**94%**
Call Of Duty: Black Ops II	226	80%
Call Of Juarez: Bound In Blood	**181**	**85%**
Call Of Juarez: Gunslinger	232	80%
Call Of Juarez: The Cartel	**208**	**30%**
Captain America: Super Soldier	208	70%
Castle Crashers	**200**	**88%**
Castlevania: Harmony Of Despair	212	67%
Castlevania: Lords Of Shadow	**197**	**85%**
Castlevania: Lords Of Shadow 2	241	81%
Carnival Island	**213**	**53%**
Catan	195	85%
Cars 2	**208**	**68%**
The Cave	230	77%
Catherine	**215**	**61%**
Champion Jockey	210	50%
Chronicles Of Riddick: Assault On Dark Athena	**178**	**87%**
Child Of Eden	211	80%
Chime Super Deluxe	**203**	**80%**
Civilization Revolution	**168**	**90%**
Clash Of The Titans	**193**	**65%**
Clive Barker's Jericho	159	84%
The Club	**163**	**80%**
Colin McRae: DiRT	**158**	**91%**
Colin McRae: DiRT 2	**184**	**87%**
Command & Conquer: Red Alert	16	79%
Command & Conquer: Red Alert: Retaliation	**176**	**55%**
Command & Conquer: Red Alert 3	178	65%
Commander's Challenge	**185**	**68%**
Command & Conquer	175	44%
Comet Crash	**186**	**84%**
Comix Zone	210	62%
Conan	**160**	**71%**
Condemned 2	165	78%
Costume Quest	**199**	**70%**
Conflict: Denied Ops	164	50%
Counter Strike: Global Offensive	**223**	**89%**
Crash Commando	174	80%
Crash Time 4: The Syndicate	**218**	**37%**
Crazy Machines Elements	210	71%
Create	**199**	**71%**
Cresent Pale Mist	200	70%
Critter Crunch	**188**	**91%**
Cross Edge	**182**	**59%**
Crystal Defenders	184	48%
Crysis 2	**204**	**72%**
Crysis 3	230	61%
Cubixx HD	**207**	**76%**
The Cursed Crusade	211	40%
Damnation	**181**	**38%**
Damage Inc: Pacific Squadron WWII	223	37%
Dance Dance Revolution	**201**	**52%**
Dante's Inferno	189	80%
Dark Mist	**164**	**53%**
The Darkness	**154**	**91%**
The Darkness II	**215**	**76%**
Dark Sector	165	62%
Dark Souls	**211**	**90%**
Darkstalkers Resurrection	**230**	**82%**
Dark Void	188	81%
Darksiders	**188**	**83%**
Darksiders II	221	86%
DC Universe Online	**202**	**80%**
de Blob 2	203	65%
Dead Or Alive 5	**223**	**78%**
Dead Island	210	79%
Dead Island: Riptide	**231**	**65%**
Dead Rising 2	197	78%
Dead Rising 2: Off The Record	**211**	**61%**
Dead Space	172	87%
Dead Space 2	**201**	**92%**
Dead Space 3	228	70%
Dead Space: Extraction	**203**	**88%**
Dead Space: Ignition	199	47%
Dead To Rights: Retribution	**192**	**68%**
Deadly Premonition: The Director's Cut	231	82%
Dead Nation	**201**	**86%**
Deadpool	233	60%
DeathSpank	**195**	**83%**
Def Jam: Icon	151	79%
Def Jam Rapstar	**199**	**72%**
Defiance	231	50%
Demon's Souls	**193**	**92%**
Destroy All Humans!: Path Of The Furon	**178**	**29%**
Derrick The Deathfin	227	79%
Deus Ex: Human Revolution	**209**	**91%**
Devil May Cry 4	**163**	**89%**
Devil May Cry HD Collection	217	80%
Diablo III	**235**	**89%**
Digger HD	186	52%
DiRT 3	**206**	**85%**
DiRT Showdown	219	84%
Disgaea 3: Absence Of Justice	**175**	**81%**
Dishonored	**224**	**92%**
Disney Infinity	235	81%

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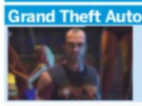
THIS MONTH'S NEW ENTRIES

The newest games, freshly squeezed among all your old favourites

Thief	70%
Castlevania: Lords Of Shadow 2	81%
Outlast	73%
Toukiden: The Age Of Demons	86%

GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
DJ Hero	**186**	**91%**
DJ Hero 2	**198**	**88%**
Doctor Who: The Eternity Clock	220	32%
Doom 3: BFG Edition	**225**	**69%**
Double Dragon Neon	224	37%
DmC Devil May Cry	**227**	**93%**
DmC injects new life into one of the best genres in all of gaming, and does so with a style and confidence that elevates it beyond its roots.		
Dragon Age: Origins	186	82%
Dragon Age II	**203**	**86%**
Dragon Ball: Raging Blast	186	40%
Dragon Ball Z: Burst Limit	**168**	**61%**
Dragon's Crown	235	87%
Driver: San Francisco	**209**	**68%**
Droplitz	**184**	**91%**
Duke Nukem Forever	207	33%
Dungeons & Dragons: Chronicles Of Mystara	**233**	**80%**
Dungeon Siege III	206	80%
Dust 514	**233**	**51%**
Dynasty Warriors: Gundam	160	40%
Dynasty Warriors: Gundam 2	**176**	**43%**
Dynasty Warriors: Gundam 3	208	56%
Dynasty Warriors: Strikeforce	**189**	**37%**
Dynasty Warriors 6	164	30%
Dynasty Warriors 6: Empires	**181**	**44%**
Dynasty Warriors 7	204	32%
Dynasty Warriors 7: Empires	**230**	**40%**
Dynasty Warriors 8	234	71%
Earthworm Jim HD	**196**	**89%**
EA Sports Active 2	200	81%
EA Sports Grand Slam Tennis	**215**	**75%**
EA Sports MMA	198	89%
Eat Lead	**178**	**38%**
Eat Them!	202	60%
echochrome	**169**	**85%**
echochrome II	202	83%
EDF: Insect Armageddon	**208**	**64%**
The Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion	**152**	**91%**
The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim	**212**	**93%**
Elefunk	**170**	**45%**
El Shaddai: Ascension Of The Metatron	208	77%
Enchanted Arms	**152**	**69%**
Enemy Territory: Quake Wars	168	60%
Enslaved: Odyssey To The West	**197**	**83%**
Epic Mickey 2: The Power Of Two	226	55%
Eternal Sonata	**176**	**87%**
Eufloria	**212**	**85%**
Everybody's Golf 5	**158**	**88%**
Everybody's Golf: World Tour	**165**	**91%**
Explodemon	203	70%
Eye Of Judgment	**159**	**65%**
EyePet	185	83%
F1 2010	**197**	**86%**
F1 2011	211	71%
F1 2012	**223**	**79%**
F1 Race Stars	226	61%
FaceBreaker	**170**	**55%**
Fairytale Fights	186	51%
Fallout 3	**173**	**97%**
Fallout: New Vegas	198	88%
Family Guy: Back To The Multiverse	**227**	**40%**
Fantastic Four: Rise Of The Silver Surfer	155	39%
Far Cry 2	**172**	**74%**
Far Cry 3	226	88%
Far Cry 3: Blood Dragon	**231**	**85%**
Fat Princess	183	65%
Fata.l Inertia EX	**168**	**65%**
FEAR	151	81%
FEAR 2: Project Origin	**176**	**87%**
FEAR 3	208	60%
FIFA 10	**184**	**90%**
FIFA 11	**197**	**91%**
FIFA 12	**210**	**86%**
FIFA 13	223	82%
FIFA 14	**236**	**90%**
FIFA Street (2012)	**217**	**74%**
FIFA Street 3	163	66%

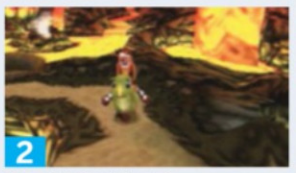
GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
Final Fight: Double Impact	**193**	**90%**
The Fight	**199**	**42%**
Fight Night Champion	203	88%
Fight Night Round 3	**151**	**87%**
Fight Night Round 4	181	84%
Final Fantasy XIV: A Realm Reborn	**236**	**81%**
Final Fantasy XIII	190	85%
Final Fantasy XIII-2	**214**	**80%**
Final Fantasy XIII: Lightning Returns	240	80%
Fist Of The North Star: Ken's Rage	**198**	**51%**
Fist Of The North Star: Ken's Rage 2	230	58%
Flight Control HD	**198**	**85%**
Flock!	179	70%
Folklore	**158**	**66%**
Formula One Championship Edition	151	72%
Fracture	**171**	**72%**
Front Mission Evolved	198	52%
Frogger: Hyper Arcade Edition	**221**	**55%**
From Dust	211	82%
Fuel	**180**	**49%**
Full Auto 2: Battlelines	151	69%
Fuse	**232**	**73%**
G-Force	183	59%
Game Of Thrones	**220**	**39%**
Galaxy Fight	215	27%
Gatling Gears	**207**	**62%**
Genji: Days Of The Blade	151	38%
Geon	**175**	**71%**
Ghost Recon Advanced Warfighter 2	157	83%
Ghost Recon Future Soldier	**219**	**60%**
Ghostbusters: The Videogame	180	80%
GI Joe	**183**	**22%**
The Godfather	151	37%
The Godfather II	**178**	**38%**
God Of War III	190	88%
God Of War: Ascension	**230**	**90%**
With brilliantly reworked combat mechanics and stunning graphics, *Ascension* is a gloriously violent prequel to the series.		
God Of War Collection*	**188**	**93%**
God Of War Collection: Volume II	**210**	**70%**
The Golden Compass	162	32%
GoldenEye 007: Reloaded	**213**	**63%**
Gotham City Imposters	**216**	**78%**
Gran Turismo 5	200	85%
Gran Turismo 6	**239**	**83%**
Grand Theft Auto IV	**166**	**98%**
Grand Theft Auto V	**236**	**97%**
 Rockstar's latest is a masterpiece; the perfect swansong for the generation and a wonderful addition to the franchise.		
Greed Corp	191	75%
Greg Hastings Paintball 2	**219**	**22%**
Grid 2	232	79%
Green Day: Rock Band	**194**	**77%**
GTI Club+	174	72%
GTA: Episodes From Liberty City	**191**	**94%**
Guardians Of Middle-Earth	**227**	**71%**
Guitar Hero III	**160**	**90%**
Guitar Hero 5	184	81%
Guitar Hero: Aerosmith	**168**	**63%**
Guitar Hero Greatest Hits	182	76%
Guitar Hero Metallica	**179**	**88%**
Guitar Hero: Van Halen	189	65%
Guitar Hero: Warriors Of Rock	**197**	**71%**
Guitar Hero World Tour	**173**	**95%**
Gundemonium Collection	197	80%
Gunstar Heroes	**181**	**85%**
Hamsterball	194	72%
Harry Potter And The Deathly Hallows: Part 1	**200**	**21%**
Harry Potter And The Deathly Hallows: Part 2	208	37%
Harry Potter And The Half-Blood Prince	**182**	**60%**
Harry Potter And The Order Of The Phoenix	155	32%
Haze	**167**	**64%**
Heavenly Sword	157	71%
Heavy Rain	**189**	**94%**
Heavy Weapon	**187**	**75%**
Heroes Over Europe	184	48%
Hitman: Absolution	**225**	**93%**

GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
Hitman HD Trilogy	230	75%
Homefront	**203**	**69%**
The House Of The Dead 4	218	82%
The House Of The Dead: Overkill	**212**	**75%**
Hunted: The Demon's Forge	207	59%
Hustle Kings	**190**	**87%**
Hyperdimension Neptunia	**202**	**21%**
I Am Alive	217	64%
Ico & Shadow Of The Colossus Classics HD	**210**	**94%**
IL-2 Sturmovik: Birds Of Prey	**183**	**72%**
The Incredible Hulk	168	52%
inFamous	**180**	**81%**
inFamous 2	207	83%
Inferno Pool	**181**	**81%**
Injustice: Gods Among Us	231	80%
International Cricket 2010	**194**	**61%**
Inversion	220	49%
Invincible Tiger: The Legend Of Han Tao	**185**	**70%**
Iron Man	166	58%
Iron Man 2	**193**	**50%**
The Jak And Daxter Trilogy	216	82%
Jak And Daxter: The Lost Frontier	**187**	**59%**
James Bond 007: Blood Stone	199	63%
James Cameron's Avatar: The Game	**187**	**64%**
JASF: Jane's Advanced Strike Fighters	217	30%
Journey	**216**	**87%**
Juiced 2: Hot Import Nights	159	78%
Jurassic Park: The Game	**194**	**60%**
Just Cause 2	190	87%
Kane & Lynch: Dead Men	**160**	**73%**
Kane & Lynch 2: Dog Days	196	71%
Katamari Forever	**184**	**88%**
Kick-Ass The Game	194	60%
Killer Is Dead	**235**	**75%**
Killzone HD	225	65%
Killzone 2	**176**	**93%**
Killzone 3	**202**	**80%**
Kingdom Hearts HD 1.5 ReMIX	236	80%
Kingdoms Of Amalur: Reckoning	**215**	**70%**
The King Of Fighters XII	182	82%
The King Of Fighters XIII	**213**	**76%**
Knights Contract	202	53%
Kung-Fu Live	**201**	**42%**
Kung Fu Panda 2	207	20%
Kung Fu Rider	**196**	**65%**
Lair	158	52%
Landit Bandit	**195**	**66%**
LA Noire	**206**	**91%**
Lara Croft And The Guardian Of Light	**198**	**90%**
The Last Guy	**171**	**91%**
Last Rebellion	**191**	**42%**
Lead And Gold: Gangs Of The Wild West	193	65%
Legend Of Spyro: Dawn Of The Dragon	**174**	**54%**
Legendary	173	62%
Lego Batman	**173**	**65%**
Lego Batman 2	221	80%
Lego Harry Potter: Years 1-4	**194**	**79%**
Lego Harry Potter: Years 5-7	213	67%
Lego Indiana Jones: The Original Adventures	**167**	**73%**
Lego Indiana Jones 2: The Adventure Continues	187	71%
Lego Pirates Of The Caribbean	**206**	**76%**
Lego Rock Band	187	75%
Lego Star Wars: The Complete Saga	**160**	**76%**
Lego Star Wars III: The Clone Wars	204	79%
Lego: The Lord Of The Rings	**227**	**85%**
Leisure Suit Larry: Box Office Bust	180	24%
Limbo	**209**	**90%**
Linger In The Shadows	173	69%
LittleBigPlanet	**172**	**94%**
LittleBigPlanet 2	**201**	**96%**
LittleBigPlanet: Karting	225	85%
LocoRoco Cocoreccho!	**159**	**80%**
Lollipop Chainsaw	221	72%
London 2012	**221**	**45%**
The Lord Of The Rings: Aragorn's Quest	199	60%
The Lord Of The Rings: Conquest	**175**	**52%**
The Lord Of The Rings: War In The North	213	42%
Lost Planet 2	**192**	**75%**
Lost Planet 3	236	58%

**denotes import review*

TOP TEN
GAMES WHERE YOU PLAY AS ANIMALS

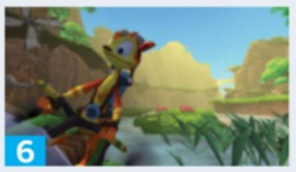
1 **Okami**


2 **Crash Bandicoot**

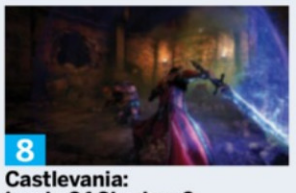
3 **Tokyo Jungle**

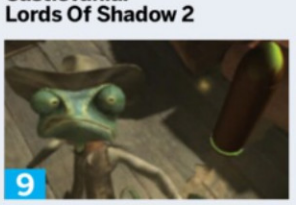
4 **Sam & Max**

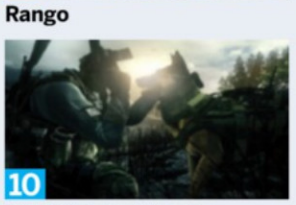
5 **Sonic The Hedgehog 2**


6 **Daxter**

7 **Kung Fu Panda**


8 **Castlevania: Lords Of Shadow 2**

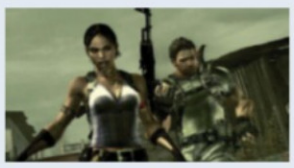

9 **Rango**


10 **Call Of Duty: Ghosts**

PLAY'S BEST GAMES SUPER FOOD EDITION

PIZZA
PLAY: TMNT

You'd have to be all kinds of into *Turtles* to put up with the bullshit showered on fans since the 16-bit era. If pizza (they eat that!) is enough of a reward, then maybe you deserve just what you get.



EGGS
PLAY: RESIDENT EVIL 5

Chris and Sheva's amusing exchanges about eggs have become meme gold, and "Gimme an egg!" might be Chris's best line yet. The urgency in his voice is amazing, and it always makes us hungry.

VERY SPECIFIC TYPES OF SANDWICH
PLAY: RESIDENT EVIL

True story: we once worked with a guy who thought Jill Valentine's actual name was Jill Sandwich. Needless to say, he doesn't work here any more. Still, that line will live on forever.

CHICKEN
PLAY: TEKKEN 3

Nobody likes the scrolling fighter modes that keep making their way into *Tekken* games, but this is as good a reason as any to admit that they're awful but carry on loving them all the same. Chicken!

BREAD
PLAY: ATELIER AYESHA: THE ALCHEMIST OF DUSK

You might *think* you like bread but do you love it as much as resident baker Fred? "It brings harmony to various dishes and gives us the vitality for life... that is the power of bread." Really?

GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
Lost Planet: Extreme Condition	**163**	**69%**
Lost: The Video Game	164	38%
Lumines Supernova	**178**	**90%**
Madagascar 3	**224**	**39%**
Madden NFL 10	184	82%
Madden NFL 11	**196**	**84%**
Madden NFL 12	209	85%
Madden NFL 13	**223**	**86%**
Madden NFL Arcade	188	58%
Mad Riders	**220**	**70%**
Mafia II	196	81%
MAG	**189**	**68%**
Magic The Gathering: Duels Of The Planeswalker	202	84%
Magic The Gathering: Duels Of The Planeswalker 2012	**208**	**70%**
Majin And The Forsaken Kingdom	199	72%
Marvel Vs Capcom 2	**182**	**90%**
Marvel Vs Capcom 3	**202**	**88%**
Marvel Ultimate Alliance	151	64%
Marvel Ultimate Alliance 2	**185**	**57%**
Max Payne 3	219	77%
Mass Effect 2	**201**	**97%**
Mass Effect 3	**216**	**93%**
Matt Hazard: Blood Bath And Beyond	**189**	**69%**
Medal Of Honor	198	86%
Medal Of Honor Airborne	**161**	**85%**
Medal Of Honor: Warfighter	225	72%
Medieval Moves	**213**	**47%**
Mega Man 9	172	75%
Mega Man 10	**192**	**82%**
Mercenaries 2: World In Flames	171	78%
Metal Gear Rising: Revengeance	**228**	**91%**
Metal Gear Rising: Revengeance is another world-class entry in gaming's most fundamentally playable genre.		
Metal Gear Solid 4	**167**	**92%**
Metal Gear Solid HD Collection	**214**	**91%**
Metro: Last Light	**231**	**60%**
Michael Jackson: The Experience	205	58%
Microbot	**202**	**51%**
Midnight Club: Los Angeles	173	84%
Mindjack	**202**	**38%**
Minecraft	**240**	**93%**
Mini Ninjas	184	80%
Mirror's Edge	**173**	**71%**
ModNation Racers	**192**	**90%**
Monkey Island 2: Special Edition	**195**	**94%**
Monster Madness	170	78%
Mortal Kombat	**205**	**81%**
Mortal Kombat vs DC Universe	173	68%
MotoGP 10/11	**204**	**64%**
MotoGP 13	233	74%
Motorhead	**173**	**60%**
MotorStorm	**151**	**92%**
MotorStorm: Apocalypse	**203**	**76%**
MotorStorm: Pacific Rift	**172**	**93%**
Mud: FIM Motocross Championship	217	50%
MX Vs ATV Alive	**206**	**42%**
MX Vs ATV Reflex	189	68%
MX Vs ATV Untamed	**164**	**58%**
nail'd	201	61%
Namco Museum Essentials	**193**	**60%**
Naruto: Ultimate Ninja Storm	174	59%
Naruto Shippuden: UNS Generations	**217**	**53%**
Naruto Shippuden: UNS 3	230	85%
Naughty Bear	**195**	**64%**
NBA Jam: On Fire Edition	212	64%
NBA 2K10	**186**	**79%**
NBA 2K11	199	82%
NBA 2K12	**211**	**88%**
NBA 2K13	224	88%
NBA Jam	**200**	**68%**
NBA Live 09	170	81%
NBA Street: Homecourt	**151**	**68%**
Need For Speed Carbon	151	76%
Need For Speed: Hot Pursuit	**199**	**91%**
Need For Speed: Most Wanted	**225**	**95%**
Need For Speed: Most Wanted is easily the best arcade racer of this generation. We absolutely love it.		
Need For Speed ProStreet	**161**	**86%**
Need For Speed Shift	184	81%
Need For Speed: The Run	**213**	**63%**
Need For Speed Undercover	173	75%
NeverDead	**215**	**39%**
Nier	192	54%
Ni No Kuni: Wrath Of The White Witch	**227**	**85%**
NHL 10	184	85%
NHL 11	**198**	**89%**
NHL 12	210	78%
NHL 13	**223**	**74%**
NiGHTS Into Dreams...	224	75%
Ninja Gaiden Sigma	**154**	**88%**
Ninja Gaiden Sigma 2	184	82%
Ninja Gaiden 3	**217**	**63%**
Ninja Gaiden 3: Razor's Edge	231	80%
Noby Noby Boy	**177**	**85%**
No More Heroes: Heroes' Paradise	206	89%
Nucleus	**155**	**82%**
Numblast	183	60%
Okami HD	**225**	**90%**
One Piece: Pirate Warriors	**224**	**69%**
Operation Flashpoint: Dragon Rising	185	78%
Operation Flashpoint: Red River	**205**	**75%**
The Orange Box	**161**	**93%**
Outland	**207**	**72%**
Outlast	241	73%
OutRun Online Arcade	**180**	**80%**
Overlord: Raising Hell	167	65%
Overlord II	**181**	**68%**
Pac-Man Championship Edition DX	**201**	**91%**
Pain	**183**	**69%**
Payday: The Heist	213	88%
Payday 2	**235**	**79%**
Peggle	**189**	**94%**
Persona 4 Arena	**231**	**91%**
Essential for both *Persona* fans and fighting game enthusiasts, *Persona 4 Arena* is an absolute joy to play.		
PES 2010	**185**	**72%**
PES 2011	197	73%
PES 2012	**210**	**74%**
Pinballistik	215	75%
PixelJunk 4am	**220**	**40%**
PixelJunk Eden	169	67%
PixelJunk Shooter	**187**	**93%**
PixelJunk Shooter 2	**204**	**90%**
PixelJunk SideScroller	**213**	**77%**
Phineas & Ferb: Across The 2nd Dimension	211	66%
PixelJunk Racers	**160**	**74%**
Piyotama	162	62%
Planet Minigolf	**196**	**58%**
PlayStation All-Stars Battle Royale	225	80%
PlayStation Move Heroes	**204**	**54%**
Poker Night 2	232	55%
POTC: At World's End	154	48%
Port Royale 3: Pirates & Merchants	**224**	**54%**
Portal 2	**205**	**95%**
Prince Of Persia	174	83%
Prince Of Persia: Classic	**173**	**67%**
Prince Of Persia: The Forgotten Sands	193	68%
Prince Of Persia Trilogy	**200**	**88%**
Prison Break: The Conspiracy	191	40%
Prototype	**181**	**76%**
Prototype 2	219	75%
Puddle	**216**	**76%**
The Punisher: No Mercy	182	49%
Puppeteer	**236**	**70%**
Pure	171	80%
Pure Football	**194**	**69%**
Puzzle Chronicles	194	70%
Puzzle Dimensions	**208**	**81%**
Puzzle Quest Galactrix	181	68%
Quantum Conundrum	**221**	**90%**
Quantum Of Solace	175	57%
Quantum Theory	**197**	**29%**
Race Driver: GRID	167	85%
Rachet & Clank: Q-Force	**227**	**52%**
Racket Sports	198	37%
Rag Doll Kung-Fu: Fists OF Plastic	**179**	**83%**
Rage	211	60%
Rainbow Moon	221	68%
Rainbow Six Vegas	**155**	**88%**
Rainbow Six Vegas 2	164	78%
Rango	**203**	**54%**
Ratchet & Clank: Quest For Booty	170	69%
Ratchet & Clank: A Crack In Time	**186**	**82%**
Ratchet & Clank: All 4 One	211	68%
Ratchet & Clank: Tools Of Destruction	**160**	**72%**
Ratchet & Clank Trilogy HD	221	88%
Rayman Legends	**235**	**83%**
Rayman Origins	212	80%
Red Dead Redemption	**193**	**92%**
Red Faction: Armageddon	207	62%
Red Faction: Guerrilla	**180**	**80%**
Remember Me	232	61%
Renegade Ops	**211**	**78%**
Resident Evil Chronicles HD Collection	221	82%
Resident Evil Code Veronica X	**211**	**72%**
Resident Evil: Operation Raccoon City	217	33%
Resident Evil: Revelations HD	**232**	**71%**
Resident Evil 4 HD	**210**	**93%**
Resident Evil 5	**177**	**86%**
Resident Evil 6	223	88%
Resistance: Fall Of Man	**151**	**83%**
Resistance 2	**173**	**90%**
Resistance 3	210	88%
Resonance Of Fate	**191**	**79%**
Retro City Rampage	228	78%
Revenge Of The Wounded Dragons	**191**	**60%**
Ridge Racer 7	151	75%
Ridge Racer Unbounded	**217**	**67%**
Riff: Everyday Shooter	162	86%
Rise Of The Argonauts	**176**	**58%**
Risen 2: Dark Waters	222	64%
Risk: Factions	**202**	**80%**
Rock Band Blitz	223	80%
Rock Band	**169**	**94%**
Rock Band 2	**179**	**96%**
Rock Band 3	199	84%
Rocket Knight	**194**	**74%**
Rocketmen" Axis Of Evil	165	63%
Rocksmith	**223**	**78%**
Rogue Warrior	188	09%
Rugby World Cup 2011	**209**	**49%**
Rune Factory Oceans	220	51%
RUSE	**197**	**82%**
The Saboteur	187	67%
Sacred 2: Fallen Angel	**180**	**76%**
Saints Row 2	172	79%
Saints Row: The Third	**211**	**88%**
SBK Generations	220	51%
Saint Seiya: Sanctuary Battle	**216**	**52%**
Sam & Max: The Devil's Playground Ep1	**194**	**90%**
Sam & Max: The Devil's Playground Ep2	**194**	**92%**
Savage Moon	**175**	**87%**
Saw	186	52%
Saw II: Flesh & Blood	**198**	**36%**
Scott Pilgrim Vs The World	197	77%
The Secret Of Monkey Island SE	**195**	**92%**
Sega Rally Online Arcade	**208**	**74%**
Sega Mega Drive Ultimate Collection	177	85%
Section 8: Prejudice	**209**	**80%**
SBK 2011	206	70%
SBK Generations	**220**	**54%**
SBK X: Superbike World Championship	193	67%
Sega Rally	**158**	**92%**
Sengoku Basara: Samurai Heroes	**198**	**76%**
Shadows Of The Damned	207	79%
Shank	**197**	**86%**
Shatter	**183**	**91%**
Shaun White Skateboarding	**198**	**70%**
Shaun White Snowboarding	173	72%
Shellshock 2: Blood Trails	**177**	**32%**
Shift 2: Unleashed	204	66%
The Shoot	**199**	**76%**
Shoot Many Robots	217	81%
Silent Hill: Downpour	**217**	**81%**
Silent Hill HD Collection	217	76%
Silent Hill: Homecoming	**174**	**64%**
The Simpsons Arcade Game	216	54%
The Simpsons Game	**160**	**82%**
The Sims 3	199	87%
The Sims 3: Pets	**212**	**70%**
SingStar	159	80%
Singularity	**195**	**80%**
Siren Blood Curse	170	62%
Skate	**159**	**86%**
Skate 2	175	82%
Skate 3	**192**	**86%**
Skullgirls	218	88%
Sleeping Dogs	**222**	**80%**
The Sly Collection	200	84%
Sly Cooper: Thieves In Time	**230**	**60%**
Sniper Elite V2	**218**	**52%**
Sniper: Ghost Warrior	206	45%
Sniper: Ghost Warrior 2	**230**	**55%**
SOCOM: Special Forces	205	63%
Soldner-X-2: Final Prototypes	**195**	**70%**
Sonic Adventure	198	63%
Sonic Adventure 2	**225**	**69%**
Sonic CD	214	82%
Sonic The Hedgehog 4: Episode 1	**199**	**82%**
Sonic The Hedgehog 4: Episode 2	225	40%
Sonic & Sega All-Stars Racing	190	78%

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GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
Sonic & All-Stars Racing Transformed	**227**	**88%**
Sonic Generations	212	70%
Sonic The Hedgehog	**151**	**52%**
Sonic Unleashed	175	48%
Sorcery	**219**	**76%**
SoulCalibur IV	**169**	**94%**
SoulCalibur V	**214**	**80%**
Spec Ops: The Line	220	59%
Spider-Man 3	**155**	**33%**
Spider-Man: Edge Of Time	212	38%
Spider-Man: Shattered Dimensions	**197**	**69%**
Spider-Man: Web Of Shadows	173	55%
Spin Jam	**174**	**32%**
Splatterhouse	200	58%
Splinter Cell Double Agent	**153**	**79%**
Split/Second: Velocity	**192**	**90%**
Sports Champions	**196**	**83%**
Sports Champions 2	225	65%
SSX	**216**	**45%**
Stacking	203	88%
Starhawk	**219**	**81%**
Star Ocean: The Last Hope International	190	63%
Star Trek	**231**	**52%**
Star Trek: D-A-C	189	57%
Star Wars: The Force Unleashed	**171**	**65%**
Star Wars: The Force Unleashed II	199	61%
Star Wars: Pinball	**230**	**79%**
Start The Party!	196	72%
Stormrise	**178**	**51%**
Stranglehold	159	65%
Street Fighter III: 3rd Strike Online Edition	**209**	**92%**
Street Fighter IV	**176**	**95%**
Street Fighter X Tekken	217	83%
Strength Of The Sword 3	**234**	**81%**
Super Puzzle Fighter II HD Turbo Remix	168	78%
Super Rub-A-Dub	**151**	**83%**
Super Street Fighter IV: Arcade Edition	207	88%
Supersonic Acrobatic Rocket Powered Battle Cars	**177**	**65%**
Stuntman: Ignition	157	82%
SuperCar Challenge	**183**	**66%**
Super Stardust HD	**155**	**74%**
Superstars V8: Next Challenge	190	55%
Superstars V8 Racing	**181**	**63%**
Super Street Fighter II Turbo HD Remix	176	72%
Super Street Fighter IV	**191**	**90%**
Supremacy MMA	**211**	**40%**
Switchball	191	75%
Swords And Soldiers	**199**	**88%**
Syndicate	216	78%
Tales Of Graces f	**222**	**77%**
Tales Of Monkey Island	**196**	**91%**
Tales Of Xillia	234	70%
Tank Battles	**186**	**68%**
Tekken 5: Dark Resurrection Online	161	87%
Tekken 6	**184**	**94%**
Tekken Tag Tournament 2	**223**	**90%**
Test Drive Ferrari Racing Legends	**221**	**60%**
Tetris	202	84%
Test Drive Unlimited 2	**203**	**62%**
The Amazing Spider-Man	221	61%
The Last Of Us	**233**	**94%**

When *The Last Of Us* is good (winter), it's better than anything else this gen – we do not say that lightly.

The Testament Of Sherlock Holmes	**224**	**55%**
The Walking Dead	**231**	**92%**

The Walking Dead should be required playing for anyone who considers themselves a fan of our favourite medium.

The Walking Dead: Survival Instinct	231	20%
Thor: God Of Thunder	**206**	**38%**
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 10	181	69%
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 11	**194**	**60%**
Tiger Woods PGA 12: The Masters	204	65%
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 13	**217**	**70%**
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 14	231	61%
Time Crisis 4	**166**	**69%**
Time Crisis: Razing Storm	199	58%
TimeShift	**162**	**72%**
TMNT: Turtles In Time-Re-shelled	186	57%
TNA Impact!	**171**	**71%**
Tokyo Jungle	223	81%
Tom Clancy's EndWar	**173**	**80%**
Tom Clancy's HAWX	177	75%
Tom Clancy's HAWX 2	**196**	**69%**
Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell Blacklist	235	71%
Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell Trilogy HD	**210**	**78%**
Tomb Raider	**229**	**90%**

GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
Tomb Raider Trilogy	204	86%
Tomb Raider: Underworld	**173**	**83%**
Tony Hawk's Project 8	151	85%
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater HD	**223**	**73%**
Tony Hawk's Proving Ground	160	72%
Tony Hawk: Ride	**188**	**52%**
Top Darts	202	71%
Top Gun	**198**	**53%**
Top Gun: Hard Lock	218	45%
Top Spin 3	**168**	**71%**
Top Spin 4	203	60%
Topotai: Spinning Through Worlds	**183**	**61%**
Tornado Outbreak	186	56%
Toy Home	**162**	**31%**
Toy Story 3	195	82%
Transformers: Dark Of The Moon	**208**	**64%**
Transformers: Fall Of Cybertron	223	73%
Transformers: Revenge Of The Fallen	**182**	**41%**
Transformers: The Game	156	34%
Transformers: War For Cybertron	**194**	**80%**
Trash Panic	181	79%
Trials Of Topaq	**159**	**50%**
Trine	184	85%
Trinity: Souls Of Zill O'll	**202**	**56%**
Trinity Universe	194	61%
Tron Evolution	**200**	**17%**
Tumble	198	70%
Turning Point: Fall Of Liberty	**165**	**40%**
Turok	163	46%
TV Superstars	**199**	**53%**
Twisted Metal	216	68%
Two Worlds II	**203**	**64%**
UFC Undisputed 2009	**180**	**90%**
UFC Undisputed 2010	193	88%
UFC Undisputed 3	**215**	**82%**
Ultimate Marvel Vs Capcom 3	212	78%
Uncharted: Drake's Fortune	**161**	**87%**
Uncharted 2: Among Thieves	**185**	**96%**
Uncharted 3: Drake's Deception	**212**	**90%**
Under Seige	**207**	**71%**
Unearthed: Trial Of Ibn Battuta: Ep1	233	05%
The Unfinsihed Swan	**225**	**78%**
Unreal Tournament III	162	88%
Untold Legends: Dark Kingdom	**151**	**54%**
Uno	189	85%
Vagrent Story	**189**	**82%**
Valkyria Chronicles	173	82%
Vancouver 2010	**189**	**76%**
Vandel Hearts: Flames of Judgement	192	87%
Vanquish	**197**	**93%**
Viking: Battle For Asgard	**165**	**74%**
Virtua Fighter 5	151	83%
Virtua Fighter 5: Final Showdown	**220**	**90%**
Virtua Tennis 3	**150**	**91%**
Virtua Tennis 4	205	79%
Wakeboarding HD	**195**	**65%**
The Walking Dead: All That Remains	240	89%
The Walking Dead: 400 Days	**234**	**83%**
Wanted: Weapons Of Fate	179	63%
Warhammer 40,000: Space Marine	**210**	**51%**
Warhawk	157	84%
Warriors: Legends Of Troy	**202**	**14%**
Warriors Orochi 3	217	59%
Watchmen: The End Is Nigh	**183**	**55%**
Way Of The Samurai 3	190	16%
Wet	**184**	**41%**
Wheelman	178	72%
Where The Wild Things Are	**188**	**56%**
White Knight Chronicles	190	55%
White Knight Chronicles II	**207**	**49%**
Who Wants To Be A Millionaire?	214	79%
WipEout HD	**172**	**84%**
Wizorb	222	78%
Wolfenstein	**183**	**72%**
Wonderbook: Book Of Spells	226	80%
Worms Collection	**224**	**85%**
Worms 2: Armageddon	198	87%
Worms Ballte Islands	**201**	**80%**
Worms Crazy Golf	213	82%
Worms Ultimate Mayhem	**217**	**80%**
WRC: FIA World Rally Championship	197	76%
WRC 2: FIA World Rally Championship	**211**	**63%**
WRC 3 FIA World Rally Championship	225	75%
WSC Real 11	**204**	**69%**
WWE All Stars	204	82%
WWE Legends Of WrestleMania	**178**	**80%**
WWE SmackDown vs Raw 2010	185	77%

GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
WWE SmackDown vs Raw 2011	199	63%
WWE 12	**212**	**50%**
WWE 13	225	55%
X-Blades	**178**	**54%**
XCOM: Enemy Unknown	**224**	**94%**

Thinking, planning, failing and dying is back in fashion: *XCOM* is a phenomenal reimagining of a classic title and an instant classic in its own right.

X-Men Arcade	**203**	**60%**
X-Men Destiny	211	35%
X-Men Origins: Wolverine	**179**	**71%**
Yakuza: Dead Souls	216	60%
Yakuza 3	**191**	**80%**
Yakuza 4	203	79%
Yar's Rev	**206**	**57%**
Zen Pinball 2	**224**	**90%**
Zombie Apocalypse: Never Die Alone	**213**	**69%**
Zone Of The Enders HD Collection	226	81%
Zuma	**182**	**78%**

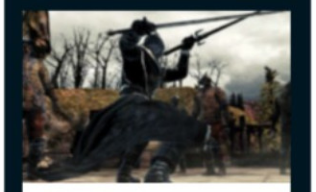
PS VITA LISTING

A-Men	217	70%
Army Corps Of Hell	**217**	**64%**
Assassin's Creed III: Liberation	225	76%
Atelier Meruru: The Apprentice Of Arland	**221**	**35%**
Everybody's Golf	215	86%
BlazBlue: Continuum Shift Extend	**216**	**85%**
Call Of Duty: Black Ops Declassified	227	18%
Dead Nation	**201**	**86%**
Dokuro	230	71%
Earth Defense Force 2017 Portable	**230**	**82%**
Escape Plan	216	81%
FIFA Football	**216**	**80%**
flOw	**151**	**90%**
Flower	176	85%
Gravity Crash	**187**	**85%**
Gravity Rush	219	86%
Hotline Miami	**233**	**85%**
Hustle Kings	216	81%
Joe Danger	**194**	**96%**
Killzone: Mercenary	236	88%
LittleBigPlanet	**223**	**93%**
Little Deviants	215	69%
Lumines Electric Symphony	**216**	**85%**
MGS HD Collection	221	70%
ModNation Racers: Road Trip	**215**	**59%**
Mortal Kombat	219	83%
MotorStorm RC	**217**	**81%**
Muramasa Rebirth	234	80%
New Little King's Story	**224**	**70%**
Ninja Gaiden Sigma Plus	217	72%
Ninja Gaiden Sigma 2 Plus	**230**	**60%**
Oddworld: Stranger's Wrath HD	214	86%
Orgarhythm	**230**	**55%**
PlayStation All-Stars Battle Royale	225	80%
Persona 4 Golden	**228**	**94%**
PixelJunk Monsters	**163**	**94%**
Puddle	**222**	**82%**
Rayman Origins	216	84%
Reality Fighters	**215**	**52%**
Resistance: Burning Skies	219	54%
Ridge Racer	**216**	**48%**
Rocketbirds: Hardboiled Chicken	212	82%
Silent Hill: Book Of Memories	**225**	**32%**
Sorcery Saga: Curse of the Great Curry God	240	70%
Soul Sacrifice	**232**	**85%**
Sound Shapes	223	88%
Superfrog HD	**234**	**41%**
Super Monkey Ball: Banana Splitz	224	78%
Sumioni: Demon Arts	**230**	**46%**
Super Stardust Delta	216	84%
Tearaway	**239**	**80%**
Terraria	232	85%
Touch My Katamari	**216**	**83%**
Toukiden: The Age Of Demons	241	86%
Ultimate Marvel vs Capcom 3	**216**	**80%**
Uncharted: Fight For Fortune	227	83%
Uncharted: Golden Abyss	**215**	**83%**
Unit 13	216	67%
Velocity Ultra	**233**	**80%**
Virtua Tennis 4: World Tour Edition	215	81%
Virtue's Last Reward	**227**	**84%**
WipEout 2048	215	87%

**denotes import review*

PLAYING THE PLAYLIST

Watch out! Games!



WHAT (have they been playing?)

Dark Souls II

WHY (was it chosen?)

Because nobody else had the balls

LUKE ALBIGÉS

SAM WOULD HAVE back-stabbed me for critical damage if I hadn't let him review *Dark Souls II*, but I was lucky enough to be able to pick up the review for one of our sister mags instead. Through dedication (read: not sleeping) and a lot of hard work (read: also not sleeping), I managed to be, according to the reps at Namco, the first person to finish the game. In the world. Surely that warrants just a teeny-tiny amount of bragging rights, even if it's made me the office wiki. Still, I love that sense of mystery – working things out for myself is a challenge that few games really offer, so I can only respect it here. I'll be on full retail code by the time you read this too, so watch out for invasions...

WHAT (have they been playing?)

Danganronpa

WHY (was it chosen?)

I bloody love visual novels

SAM SMITH

IT'S AMAZING THAT a game like *Danganronpa* even made it to the West, but I'm grateful it did. I'm a big visual novel fan, and *Danganronpa* feels like a mixture of *Phoenix Wright*, *Virtue's Last Reward* and *Persona*. And yes, it's as rad as that sounds. Check out my review for an extended version of the things I think, but long story short, it's well worth picking up.

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OUT OF THIS WORLD!

DESTINY

An inside look at the most ambitious game on PS4

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